Dragon Knights
Mineko Ohkami
21

TOKYOPOP

Dragon Knights

100% AUTHENTIC MANGA

"An epic tale that any lover of fantasy can become addicted to."
–Sequential Tart

After months spent apart, Rath and Cesia have at last been reunited! Since her abduction at the hands of Nadil, Rath has faced all manner of demons—from weakest warrior demon to the mighty Demon Lord himself—all to save the half-demon fortuneteller who has captured the Dragon Knight's heart. But there's one problem: Just because they've been reunited, doesn't mean that they're safe!

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DRAGON KNIGHTS 21

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Mineko Ohkami

Dragon Knights

Written and Illustrated by
Mineko Ohkami

Volume 21

TOKYOPOP

HAMBURG // LONDON // LOS ANGELES // TOKYO

THE DRAGON LORD & THE DEMON LORD:

A HISTORY OF THE BATTLE TO CONTROL D[illegible]

[illegible]

CERN[illegible]RA

[illegible] ADMINISTRATOR OF THE

[illegible] IN THE HEARTS OF [illegible]

The Keeper of the Tome

My name is Cernozura and I am the chief administrator for the Dragon castle, Draqueca, in the heart of Dragoon the Dragon Kingdom. Within these pages, I will attempt to chronicle the events of yesteryear in the hopes that it will, in turn, offer some future understanding of the chaos that currently befalls us. I feel it's imperative that I record a comprehensive history of the events that have led to this dark hour, for I fear that none will remain to tell the tale. My only hope is that this tome may survive so that future generations will know of the valiance of the Dragon Tribe.

Rise of the Demon Lord

Our worst fears have come to pass. The Demon Lord Nadil has been resurrected, and he has stolen from the bosom of our care the fortuneteller Cesta, who harbors an incredible magic that we have only just begun to witness. In the service of a villain as pernicious as Nadil, Cesta, whether against her will or willingly giving in to the seductive charm of the dreaded Demon Lord, may prove to be the most dangerous threat we've faced.

Into the Abyss

The Dragon Knights have been dispatched to Rainaldia, the kingdom of the Demon Lord, charged with rescuing Cesta. While their journey was not without its share of peril, all three Knights have at last gained entry to Nadil's castle, an ominous-looking fortress that rests atop a dead island surrounded by an ocean of souls. And, remarkably, they were not the only ones.

In addition to the thousands of demons that swear allegiance to Nadil, there is at least one who doesn't. Zoma, the small, winged demon, has long been a companion of Cesta. Attempting to bring her the powerful wind staff that was bequeathed to us by the Star Princess, Zoma has joined with Ritchel, a thief who has proven herself to be a loyal ally to Lykouleon Ringleyr, Ritchel's faerie companion, and Tintlet, Rune's beloved. They, too, have gained entrance to Nadil's palace, and word has reached our far palace that they have joined forces with the Dragon Knights.

It seems our heroes need whatever help they can accrue as all three Knights have been captured and are now imprisoned in Nadil's rank dungeon. The prison at Rainaldia is known to be inescapable, and it is particularly deadly for Dragon Clan. It is surrounded by the Sea of the Dead—a vast moat of damned souls each desiring a living body to possess. It is in this abominable hole that Thatz and Rune are currently situated in Rath, however, currently suffers in solitude in a hell of a different sort. It has been revealed that the Demon Lord shares a dark bond with the Dragon Knight of Fire. It's a connection that has taken root within their very souls, and it appears that nothing can be done to lift it.

Meanwhile, Lim attempts to get the Water of Change from Leela and discovers that their powers are actually connected. It is during their subsequent fight that it is revealed that Leelu is the Water of Change...and that that Water of Change is actually tears, not water. As Zoma searches for Cesta he recalls Rath offering him more power by uniting his essence with that of a bird within Rath's body. Rath also suggests that Zoma be his replacement so that he and the Dragon Clan can be free. Zoma finds Cesta in her dark form, but her goodness manages to fight through and regain control over her body. Zoma shape-shifts into a large bird, and with Cesta on his back plunges into the Sea of the Dead. It is there that Cesta is reunited with the chain-bound Rath. She frees him from bondage, but fears his wounds to be mortal...

The Heroes of Dragon Knights

Lord Lykouleon

The beloved Dragon Lord, Lykouleon is the sovereign ruler of Dragonia. The successors of the Dragon Clan and the might of the Dragon Army are at his command.

Lady Raseleane

Lykouleon's queen, the Lady Raseleane and rendered barren by the Demon Lord and unable to provide Lykouleon with an heir.

Dragon Officers

Harnessing the power of the five Dragon Stars the Dragon Officers should number five strong, but after the Demon Army's ascend on Dragonia, only three officers remain.

Rinwalk

The Yellow Dragon Officer and Secretary of State.

Tetheus

The Black Dragon Officer and Secretary of Security.

Cernozura

The Dragon Castle Administrator, Cernozura is also a well-appointed castle historian.

Dragon Knights

Rath

The Dragon Knight of Fire, Rath is part Valsi and lives for killing demons.

Thatz

The Dragon Knight of Earth, the human Thatz was once a thief, and his love for gold hasn't abated.

Rune

The Dragon Knight of Water, Rune is an elf and abilities the other and Dragon Knights lack.

Other Allies

Cesia

A sad dancer fortuneteller with the ability to enhance the power of close to close proximity to her

Zoma

Cesia's demon friend and companion

Tantlet

A thief who was sacrificed death for her beloved Rune and her dying ruse.

Kitchel

Another thief who is Lykouleon, stored possession the powerful Three Treasures and is dying to get them to Dragonia.

Ringleys

A fairy who was rescued from a demon and now accompanies Kitchel.

Delte

Lykouleon's human fortuneteller.

Star Princess

Her mother knows about the powerful princess, but she and isolated Rath on eternal adventure.

Grafish

The Star Princess's bodyguard. Rath the Princess and Grafish seem to be friendly in Lykouleon's court.

Rohro

A human on a mission to save the dying Sacria race, was reunited Rune in the past.

The Villains of Dragon Knights

Nadd

The evil and justly feared Demon Lord. Nadd had been slain by the Dragon Lord, but his body was recently retrieved and resurrected by his loyal army. Now he once again prowls over the Demon Realm, hungry for revenge.

Demon Officers

Shydeman

Duke of Nadd's generals, Shydeman led the unintended attack on Crescent that brought back the Demon Lord.

Shyrendora

Another general, Shyrendora is sister to Shydeman and sent to Tristan, who fights against her as one of the Dragon Officers.

Fedelta

Assuming directly by Shydeman Fedelta has become one of the most vicious officers in the Demon Army.

Lady Medusnea

Another officer in Nadd's army. Medusnea has an ongoing rivalry with Fedelta.

Other Enemies

Dierrez

The individual "Rogue demon, Dierrez's loyalties lay not with the Demon Lord, but with himself.

Saabel

The so-called "Collector of Corpses," Saabel possesses the ability to manipulate the dead into puppets he controls.

Lim Kaana

A lowly little demon charged with stealing Varmese's power from there.

Khart

Garfalkey

DUSIS
HYURAV
GLACIOSA
KAINALDIA
MEMPHIS
HERMOSA
KUULTA
DRAGOON
THREE POLES OF BEGINNING
N
ARINAS

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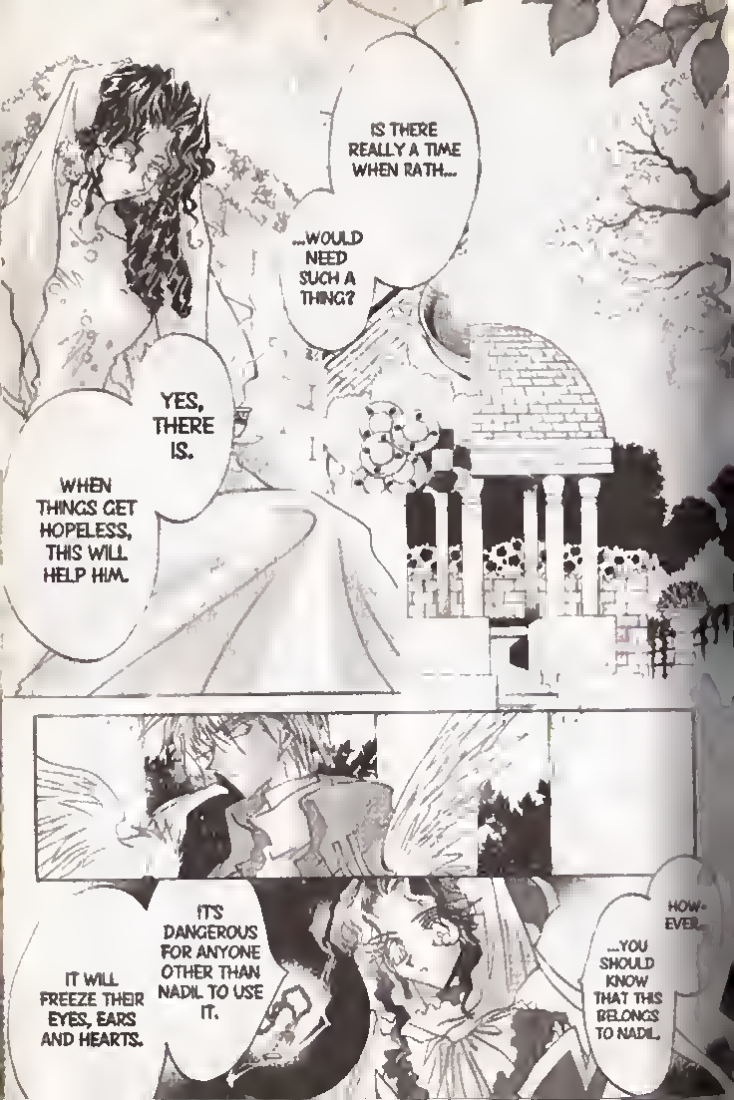
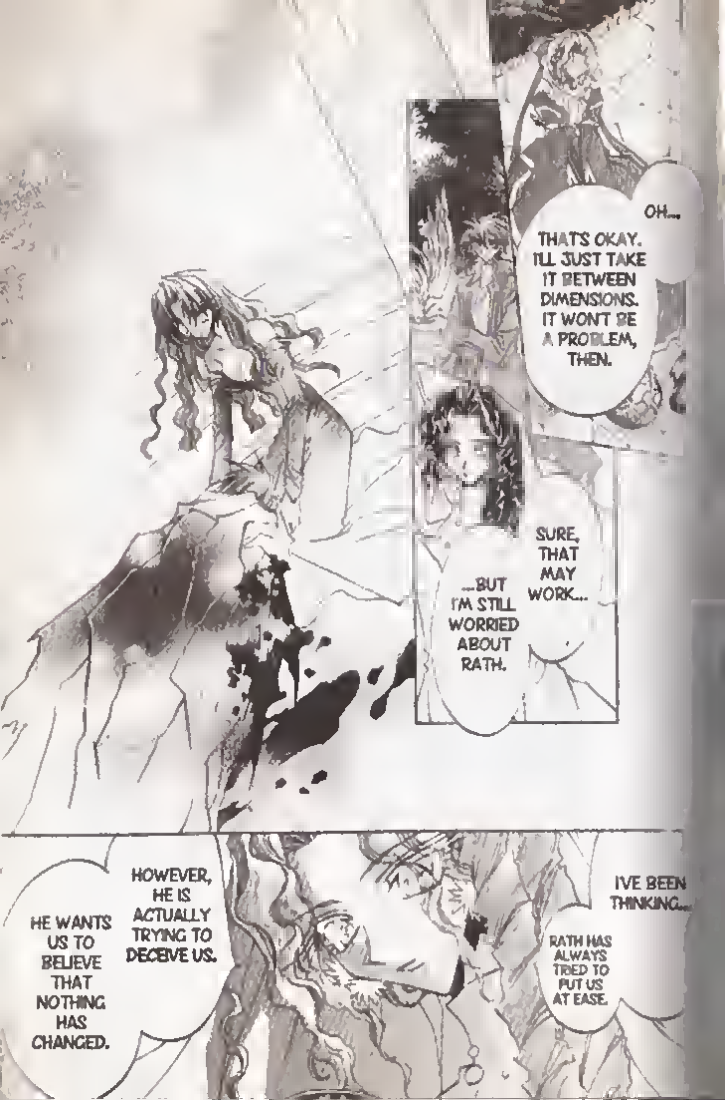
SOMEDAY, IT'LL HELP YOU.
I'M SURE OF IT.

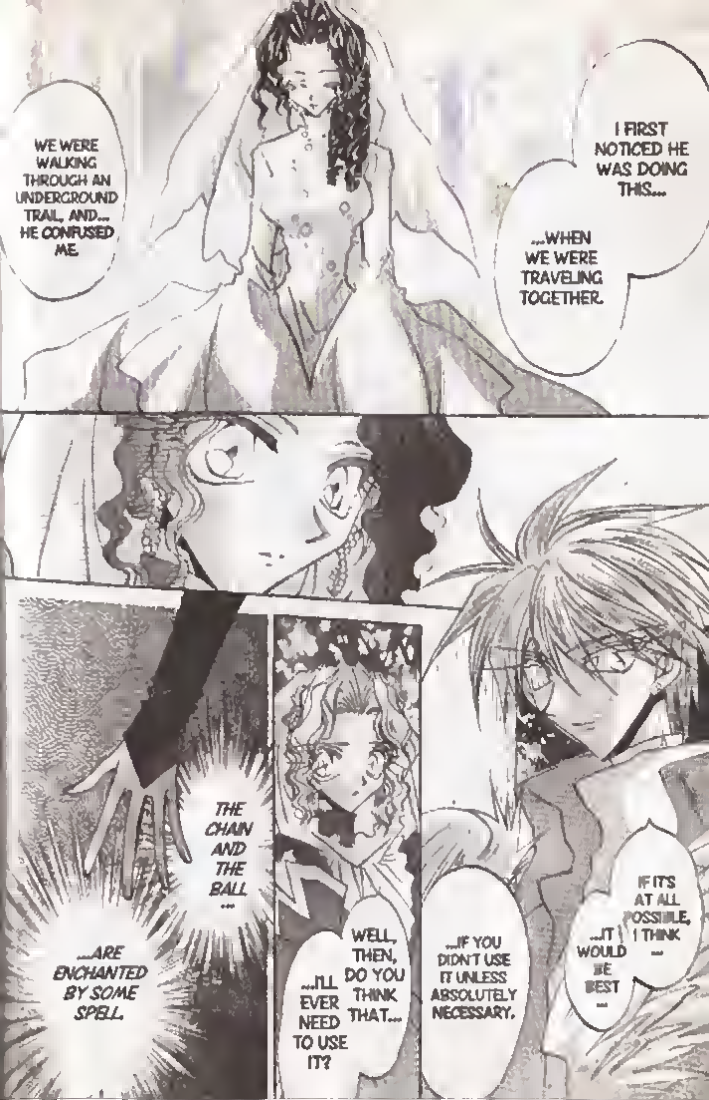
DRAGON KNIGHT'S
ドラゴン騎士団
A World Away

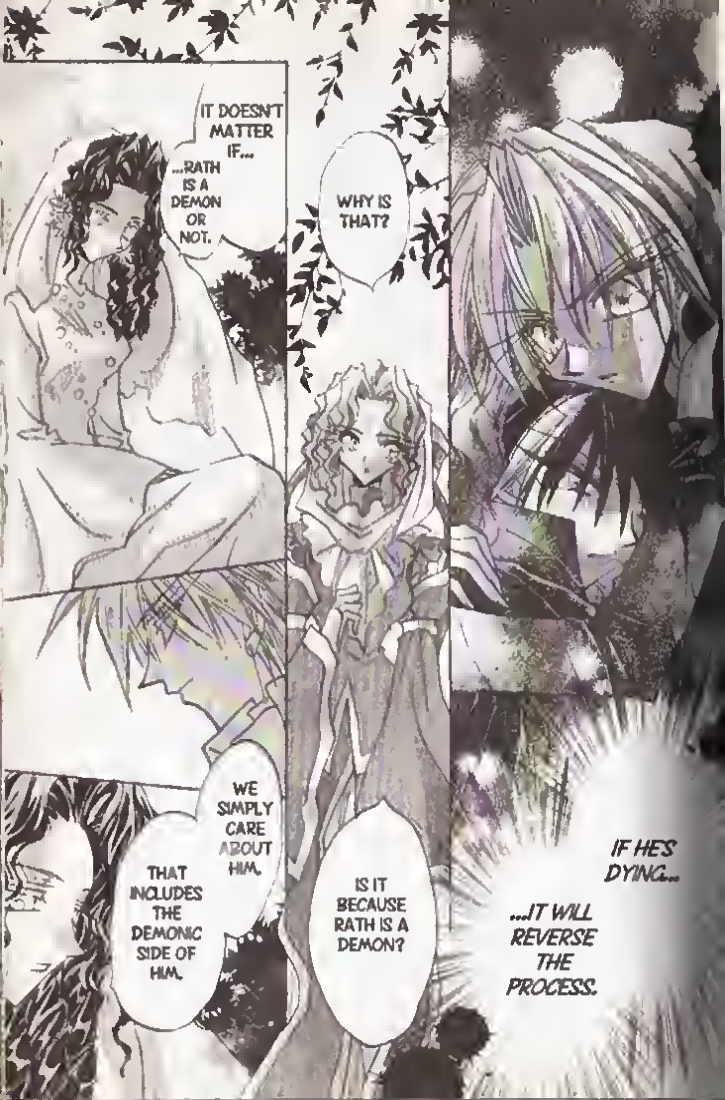
RATH...
YOUR ARM...


IS THERE REALLY A TIME WHEN RATH...
...WOULD NEED SUCH A THING?
YES, THERE IS.
WHEN THINGS GET HOPELESS, THIS WILL HELP HIM.
IT WILL FREEZE THEIR EYES, EARS AND HEARTS.
IT'S DANGEROUS FOR ANYONE OTHER THAN NADIL TO USE IT.
HOW-EVER...
...YOU SHOULD KNOW THAT THIS BELONGS TO NADIL.

HOW CAN SOMETHING SO DANGER-OUS HELP RATH?
I JUST DON'T GET IT...
ARE YOU GIVING THIS TO ME BECAUSE I'M A DEMON?
IS THAT WHY?
IT DOESN'T MAKE SENSE TO ME.
YES. I'M SORRY TO ASK THIS OF YOU.
HOWEVER, CESIA, JUST BEING A DEMON...
...DOESN'T NECESSARILY MAKE YOU SAFE.


OH...
THAT'S OKAY. I'LL JUST TAKE IT BETWEEN DIMENSIONS. IT WON'T BE A PROBLEM, THEN.
SURE, THAT MAY WORK...
...BUT I'M STILL WORRIED ABOUT RATH.
IVE BEEN THINKING...
RATH HAS ALWAYS TRIED TO PUT US AT EASE.
HOWEVER, HE IS ACTUALLY TRYING TO DECEIVE US.
HE WANTS US TO BELIEVE THAT NOTHING HAS CHANGED.


WE WERE WALKING THROUGH AN UNDERGROUND TRAIL, AND... HE CONFUSED ME.
I FIRST NOTICED HE WAS DOING THIS...
...WHEN WE WERE TRAVELING TOGETHER.
THE CHAIN AND THE BALL ...
...ARE ENCHANTED BY SOME SPELL.
WELL, THEN, DO YOU THINK THAT...
...I'LL EVER NEED TO USE IT?
...IF YOU DIDN'T USE IT UNLESS ABSOLUTELY NECESSARY.
IF IT'S AT ALL POSSIBLE, I THINK ...
...IT WOULD BE BEST ...

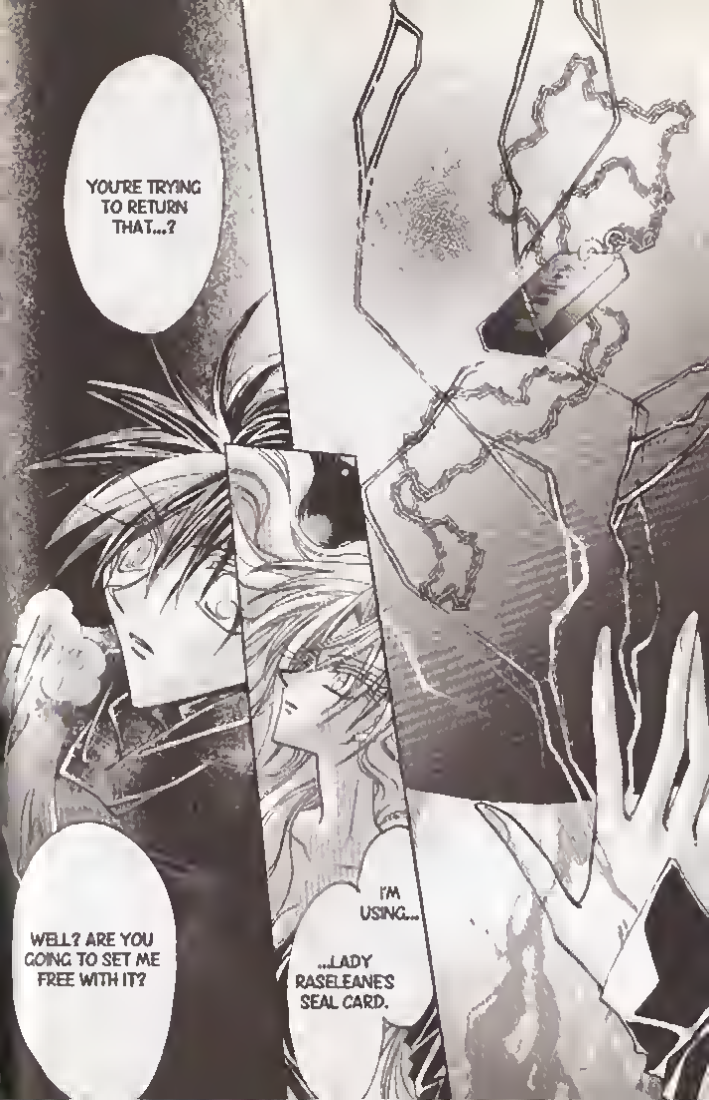

IT DOESN'T MATTER IF...
...RATH IS A DEMON OR NOT.
WHY IS THAT?
IF HE'S DYING...
...IT WILL REVERSE THE PROCESS.
IS IT BECAUSE RATH IS A DEMON?
WE SIMPLY CARE ABOUT HIM.
THAT INCLUDES THE DEMONIC SIDE OF HIM.

BUT... THERE'S SOMETHING ELSE...
SOMETHING THAT EVEN RATH CANNOT CONTROL.

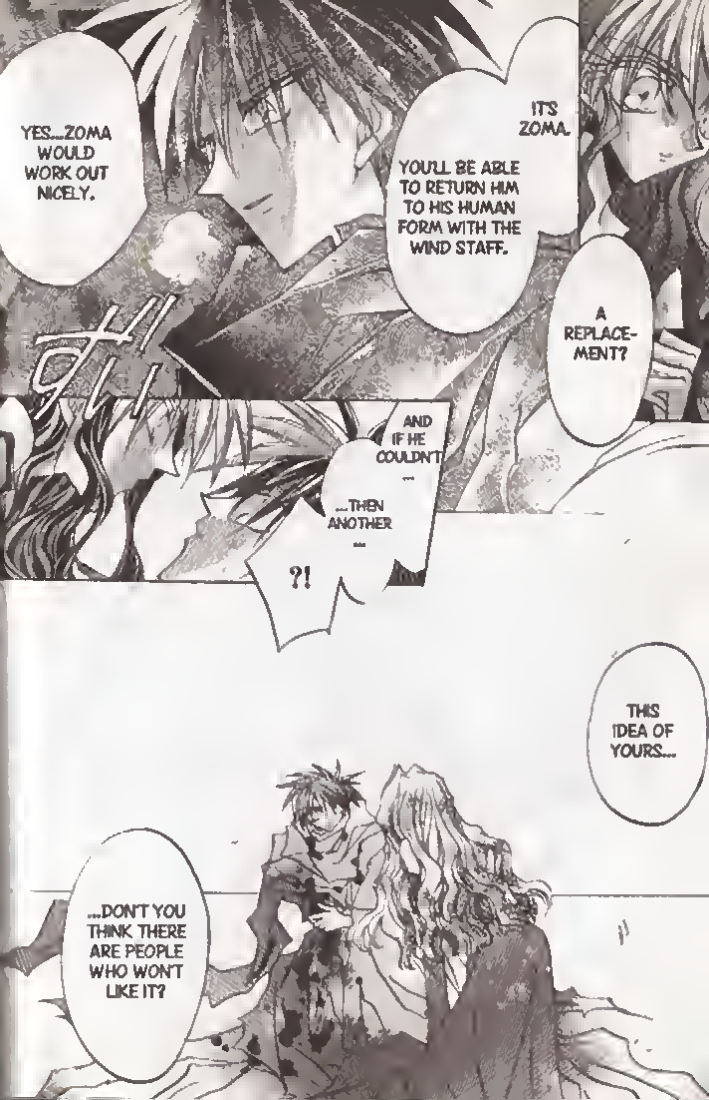
DO YOU REMEMBER...
...WHEN I CALLED YOU STUPID?
YES.
YOU'RE NOT AFRAID...
...THAT I MIGHT REALLY BE HERE TO KILL YOU?
OH YEAH?
WHAT IS IT?
WELL, I'VE BEEN KEEPING SOMETHING FOR YOU.

IF YOU WERE HERE TO DO THAT, YOU'D BE BREAKING YOUR PROMISE TO THE OTHERS.
IT WOULD MAKE YOU A LIAR.
OH, GREAT ...
THAT'S RICH.
I SEE. YOU'RE GONNA USE THAT AGAIN...
DON'T WORRY. I'VE DONE THIS BE-FORE.
YOU'RE ABSOLUTELY RIGHT.
WELL, I BETTER GET ON WITH WHAT I CAME HERE FOR...

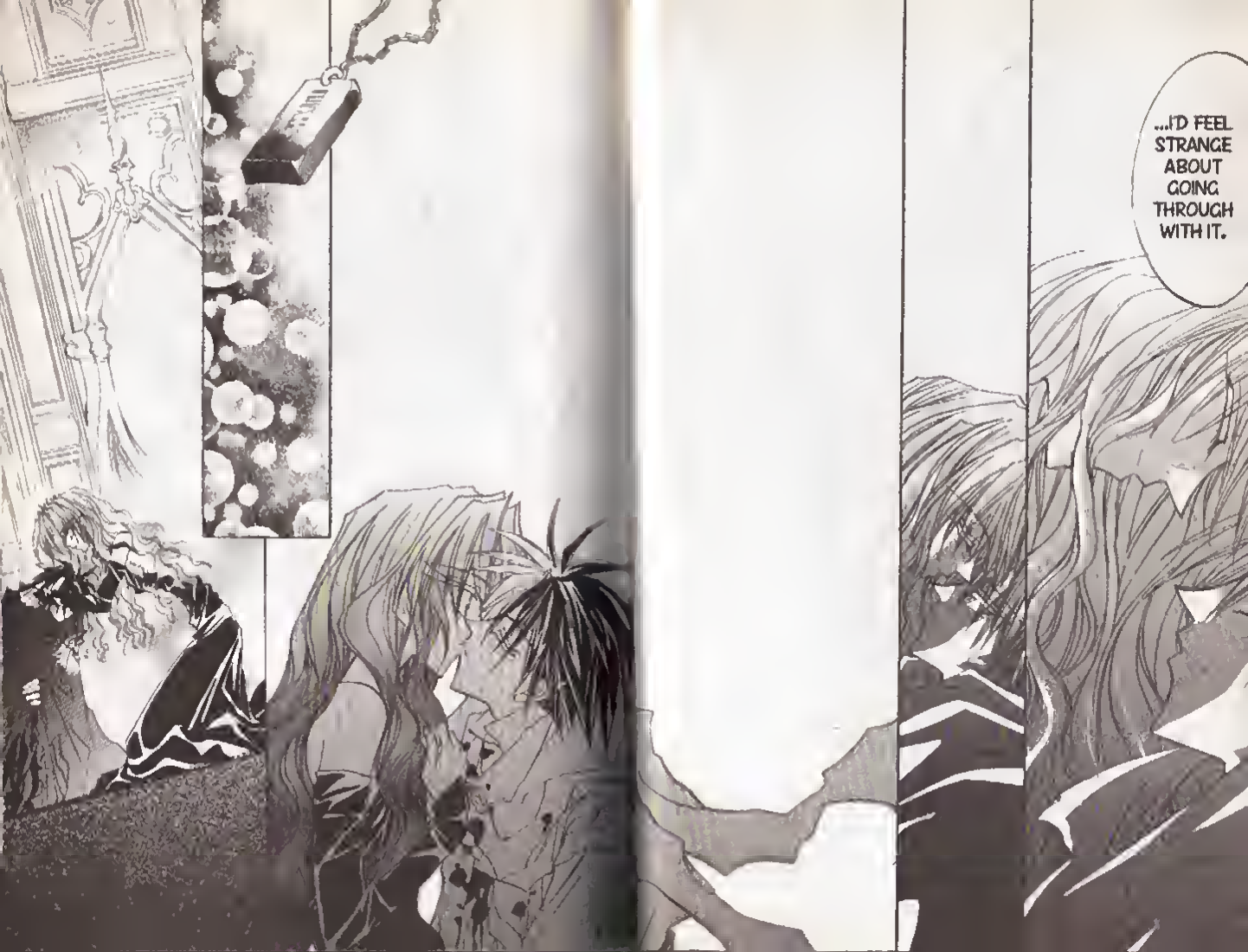
I'M DISAP-


YOU'RE TRYING TO RETURN THAT...?
WELL? ARE YOU GOING TO SET ME FREE WITH IT?
I'M USING...
...LADY RASELEANE'S SEAL CARD.

I MADE A PROMISE TO LADY RASELEAN.
YOU KNOW HOW IT IS.
IF YOU REALLY WANT TO SET ME FREE...
...YOU'LL LEAVE ME HERE TO DIE.
NOOO!!
AFTER ALL, A REPLACEMENT HAS ALREADY BEEN PREPARED FOR ME.
PLUS, IT WOULD BE MUCH FASTER THAT WAY.

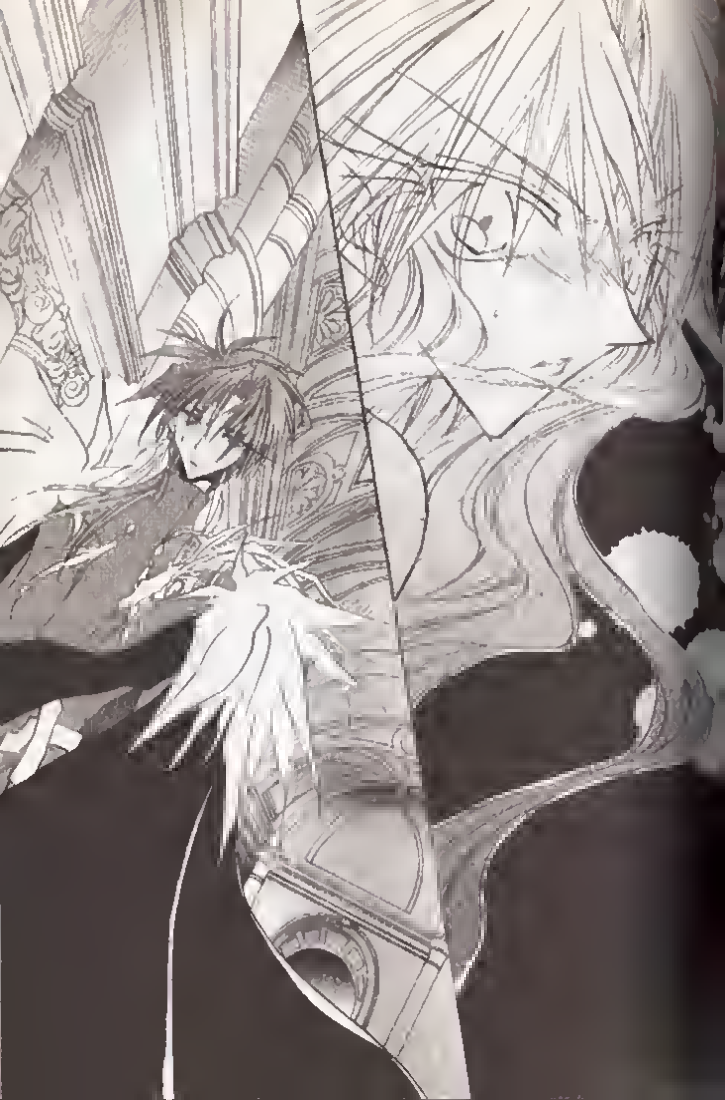

YES...ZOMA WOULD WORK OUT NICELY.
IT'S ZOMA.
YOU'LL BE ABLE TO RETURN HIM TO HIS HUMAN FORM WITH THE WIND STAFF.
A REPLACE-MENT?
AND IF HE COULDN'T ...
...THEN ANOTHER ...
?!
THIS IDEA OF YOURS...
...DON'T YOU THINK THERE ARE PEOPLE WHO WON'T LIKE IT?

OR DO YOU MEAN NADIL?
LIKE WHO? YOU MEAN THE DRAGON FAMILY?
OR MAYBE IT'S YOU.
MAYBE THE IDEA OF NOT BEING ABLE TO GIVE ME A HARD TIME DISPLEASES YOU.
WELL...IF YOU REALLY DON'T LIKE IT...
SO YOU ALREADY KNEW I WOULDN'T AGREE?


...I'D FEEL STRANGE ABOUT GOING THROUGH WITH IT.

I WILL RELEASE ALL THE THINGS...
...THAT WERE INSIDE OF RATH!

ZOMA!!



ZOMA!
HURRY!!
フォォォ
YANK
?!

MY HAIR...
I SEE...
COME TO THINK OF IT...
...WHY DON'T WE TRY HAVING ONE OF YOUR DRAGONS BREAK THESE BARS?
GO ON. TRY IT. I DON'T CARE.
BUT I CAN ASSURE YOU— THE BARS WILL NOT BREAK. YOU'LL ONLY SUCCEED IN INFLICTING PAIN UPON YOUR OWN DRAGONS.

!!
!
I PLACED A KEKKAI NO JUBAKU GUARDING SPELL ON YOUR CELL.

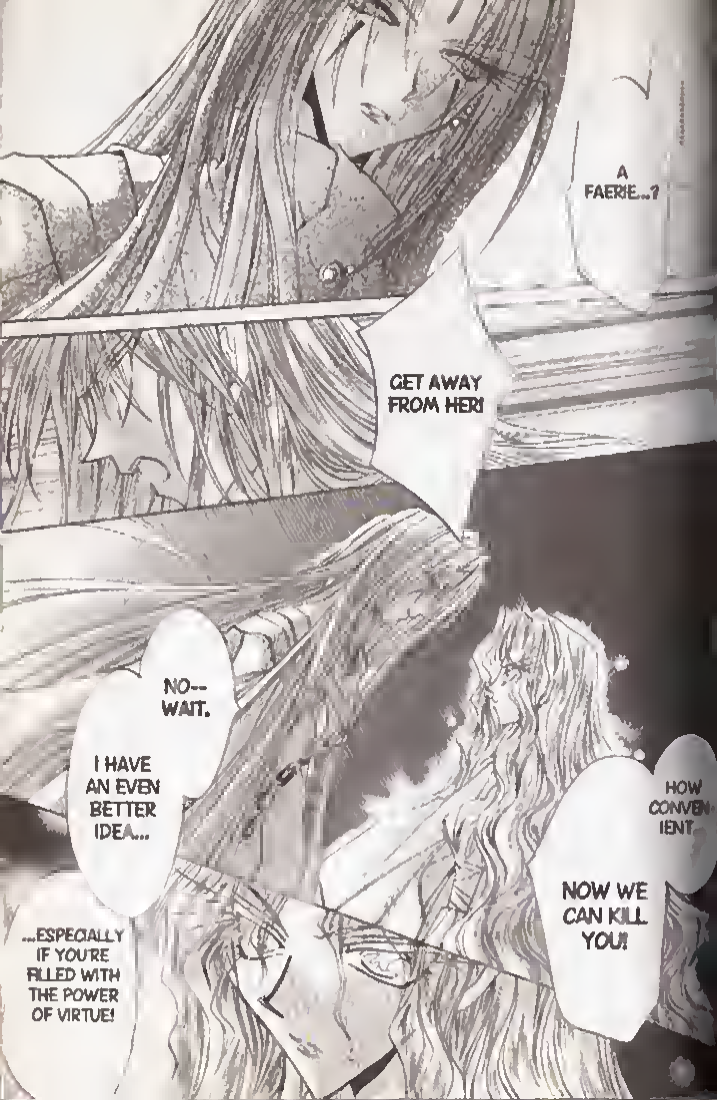
THATS...
...THATS TETHEUS'--!!

WHOA

DAMMIT!!!

DUH!
It's sure as running after that daughter!
YOU DON'T NEED TO TELL ME THAT!
KITCHEL!! DODGE IT!

TINTLET!!


A FAERIE...?
GET AWAY FROM HER!
NO-- WAIT.
I HAVE AN EVEN BETTER IDEA...
...ESPECIALLY IF YOU'RE FILLED WITH THE POWER OF VIRTUE!
HOW CONVEN IENT.
NOW WE CAN KILL YOU!

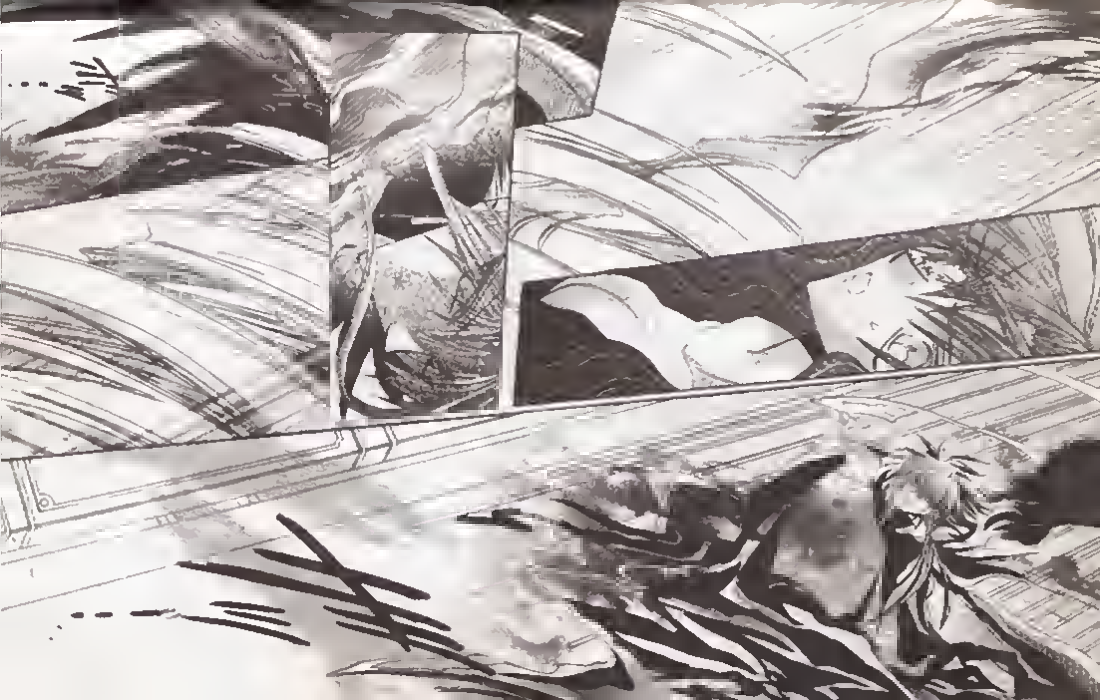
RUN, TINTLET! GET AWAY!!
THE FOOLISH PRINCESS OF A FOOLISH RACE...
DO AS YOU WISH.
BUT I WON'T GIVE YOU MY POWER OF VIRTUE!
!!

Gasp!
I SEE...
YOU RELEASED THE SOULS WITHIN RATH.
!!
CESIA!

YOU WANT TO BIND RATH AND CHAIN HIS LIFE TO YOURS SO YOU CAN LIVE FOREVER!
YOU'RE THROUGH!
I WON'T LET YOU HAVE THINGS YOUR WAY!
HOLD ON TIGHT, CESIA!
WE'RE GOING UP!

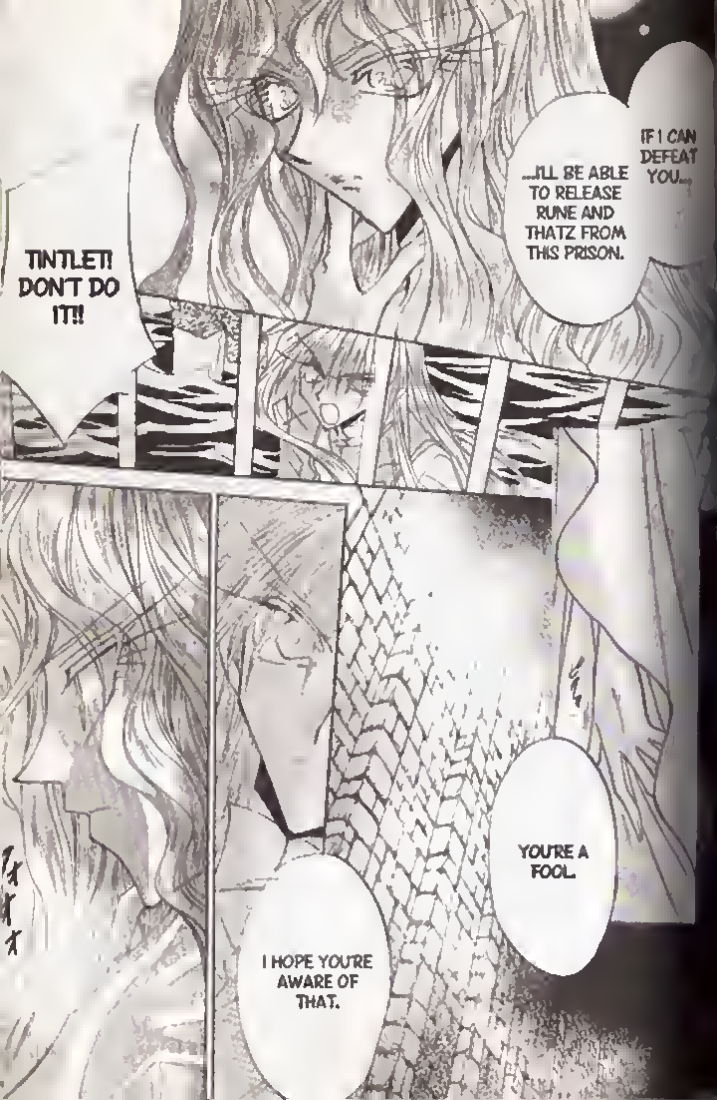
ZOMA!!
We have to get out of here...
...and fast!
I HAVE TO PROTECT CESIA!!

WE'RE MAKING A BREAK FOR IT!
WATCH YOUR HEAD!



I'M ALRIGHT!
JUST DON'T LET GO ...!
ZOMA!!

HOW FRIGHTENING!


IF I CAN DEFEAT YOU...
...I'LL BE ABLE TO RELEASE RUNE AND THATZ FROM THIS PRISON.
TINTLET! DON'T DO IT!!
YOU'RE A FOOL.
I HOPE YOU'RE AWARE OF THAT.

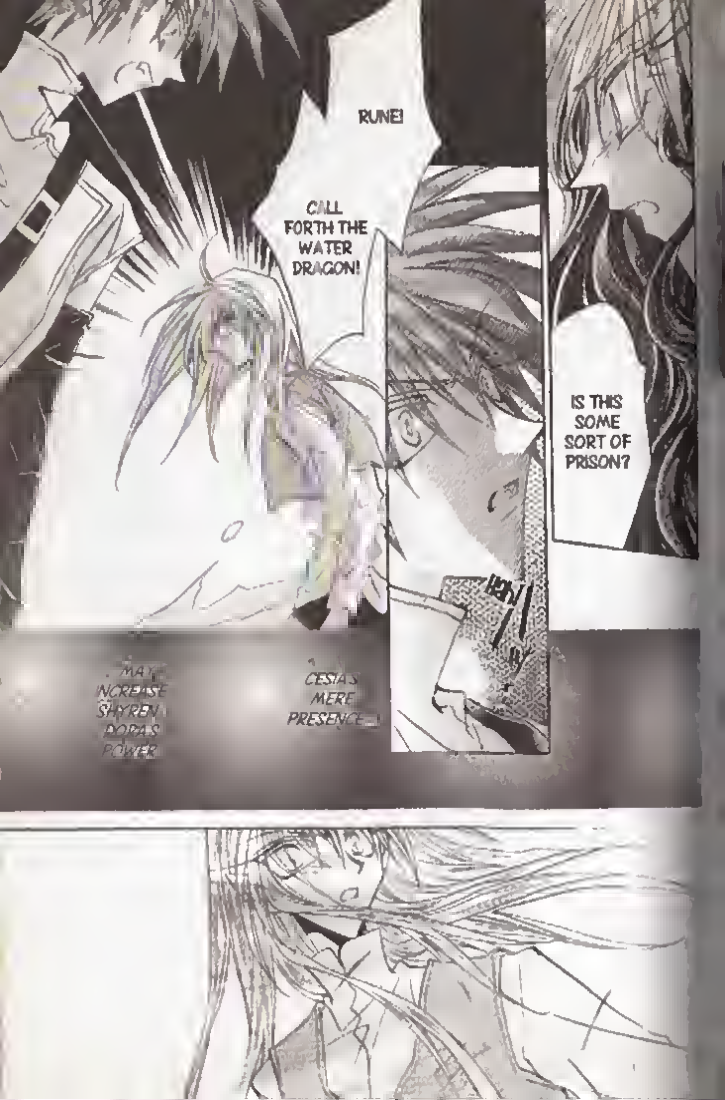
!!
WHAT THE HELL?!

ZOMA!
WHERE DOES THIS LEAD?! HOW LONG DO WE HAVE TO KEEP ASCEND-ING?!
I...I DON'T KNOW!
ALL I DO KNOW IS THAT NO MATTER HOW HIGH WE GO, WE WON'T BE OUT OF THE SEA OF THE DEAD!

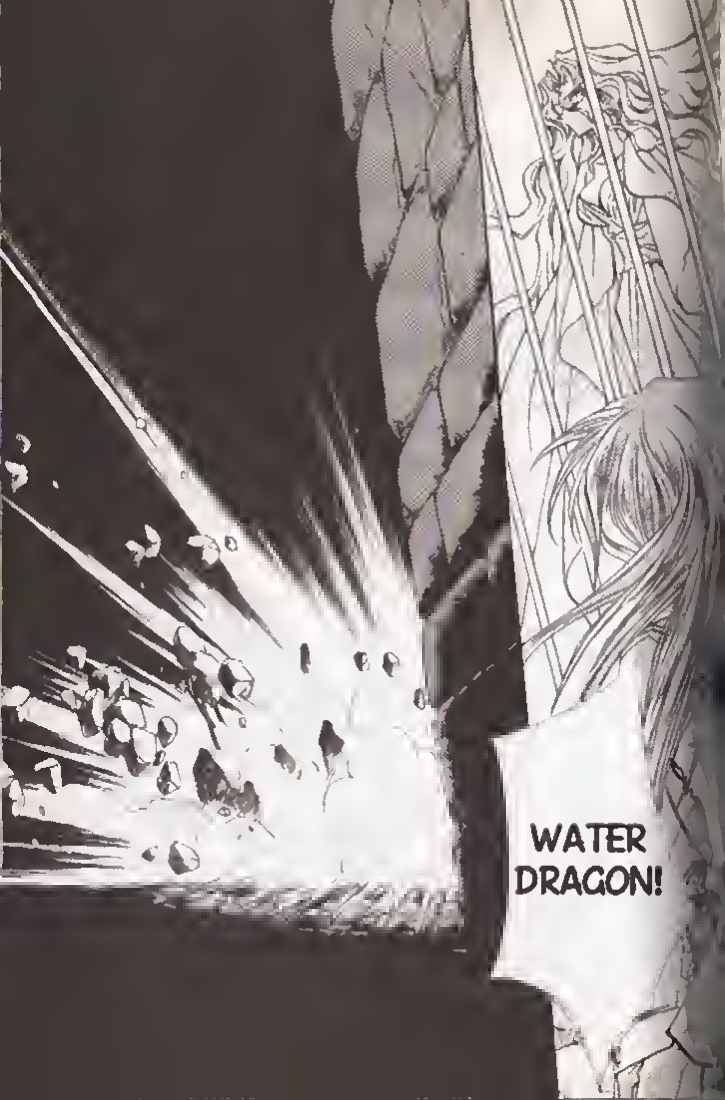
WHERE'D THIS WATER...
...COME FROM?!
TINTLET!!
Mhp!

!!
ANOTHER DEMON?!
TINTLET! STOP IT!!
WHAT IS SHE DOING?!

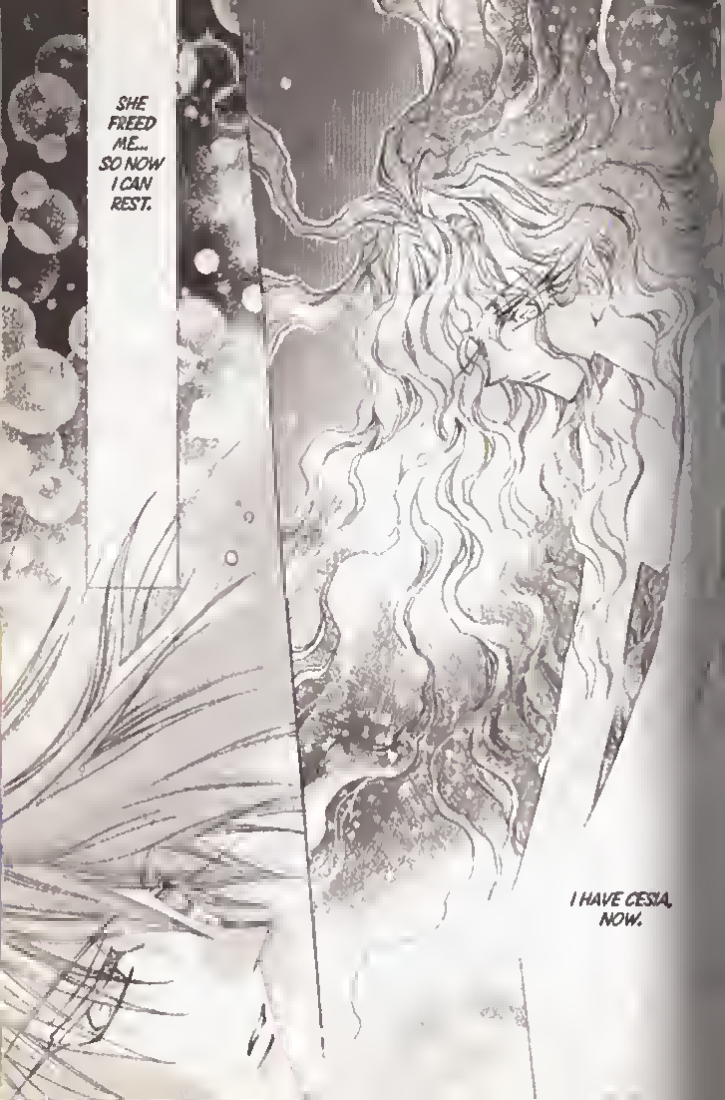
CESSIA?!
WHOA ...!
WHAT ARE YOU DOING HERE?!
I THOUGHT ZOMA WENT LOOKING FOR YOU!
DID HE FIND YOU?!
THAT?!
UH...
Y-YES ...


RUNE!
CALL FORTH THE WATER DRAGON!
IS THIS SOME SORT OF PRISON?
MAY INCREASE SHYREN DORAS POWER
CESIA'S MERE PRESENCE...

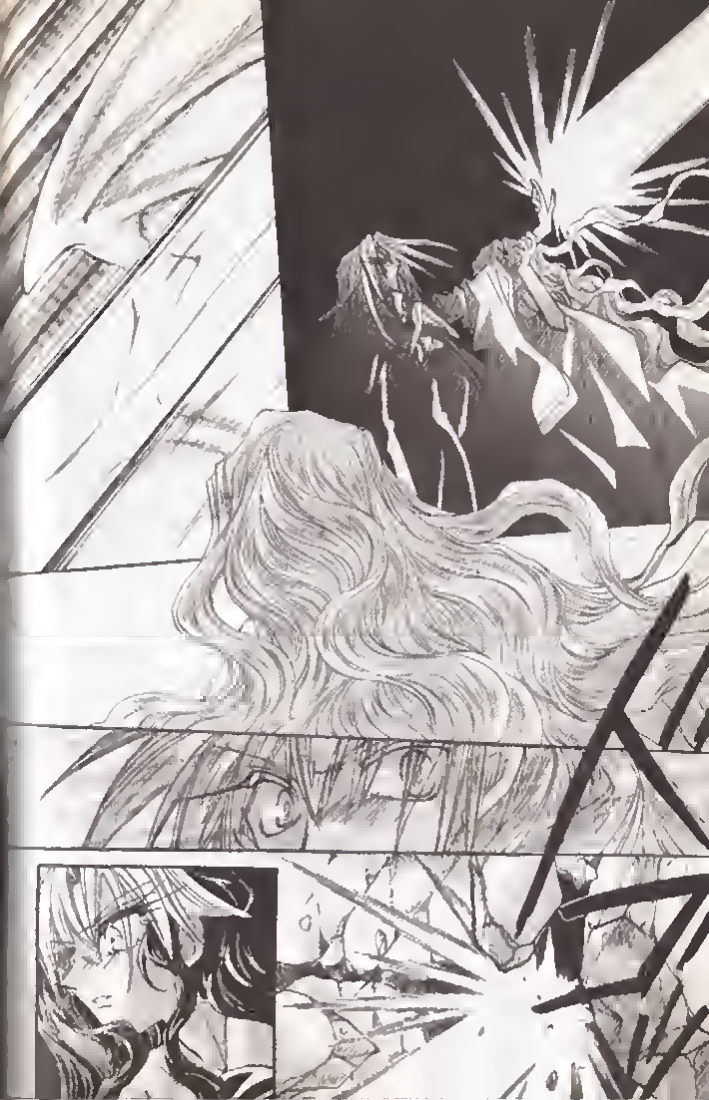
HMPH!
IT'S HER! BUT WHY IS SHE HERE?!
EARTH DRAGON!


WATER
DRAGON!

YOU CAN GO ON.
I'LL BE OKAY.
YOU DON'T HAVE TO STAY.
...BUT IT'S TIME FOR ME TO LEAVE.
OUR PATHS CROSSED...


SHE FREED ME... SO NOW I CAN REST.
I HAVE CESIA, NOW.

BAH!
DAMN YOU!
TINTLET!!



TINTLET! RUN AWAY WHILE YOU STILL CAN!
NOT A CHANCE!

IT'S THE FAERIE PRINCESS' POWER OF VIRTUE

I REFUSE TO ENHANCE HER POWER! I WON'T HELP DEMONS!
NOT ANYMORE!!
WE'RE GETTING OUT!
HER POWER OF VIRTUE MAY BE ABLE TO BREAK THE SPELL ON THIS CELL!
I'LL GO FIRST! YOU GUYS FOLLOW ME!
WE DON'T EVEN KNOW WHICH WAY IS OUT.
EASIER SAID THAN DONE.

THIS PRISON IS JUST ABOVE WHERE RATH WAS BEING HELD.
SO I'M PRETTY SURE WE'RE STILL IN THE SEA OF THE DEAD.
SO THE EXIT MUST BE A BIT HIGHER...

...NOW THAT YOU NO LONGER HAVE YOUR MASTER?
FIRE VERSUS FIRE, EH?
FIRE DRAGON...DO YOU THINK YOU CAN BEAT ME...
DID THEY MAKE IT?
FEDELTA...
THE DRAGON IS PROTECTING THEM SO THEY CAN ESCAPE.

YES?
WHAT IS IT, LORD SHYDEMON?
...MY POWER WILL BE INCREASED AS WELL!
THAT'S GREAT!
ONCE LORD NADIL'S FIRE BECOMES STRONGER...

HMPH!
HE ACTUALLY RETURNED THE BLOW.

……
?!

WHAT?!
UGH...
SOMEONE IS CONTROLLING THE FIRE DRAGON?!

PERHAPS... ONE OF THE DEAD?
BUT WHO COULD IT BE?

DAMMIT!
I HAVE A BAD FEELING ABOUT THIS...!

OH...
...CREW-GER...
CESIA!!
ARE YOU SURE WE SHOULD KEEP GOING?!

HE'S COVERED IN BLOOD!
PLUS, HIS FRONT RIGHT PAW IS...
WHY IS HE HERE?
WAIT A MINUTE...
CREWGUY

RIDE THE AIR CURRENTS I'M CREATING!

ZOMA!

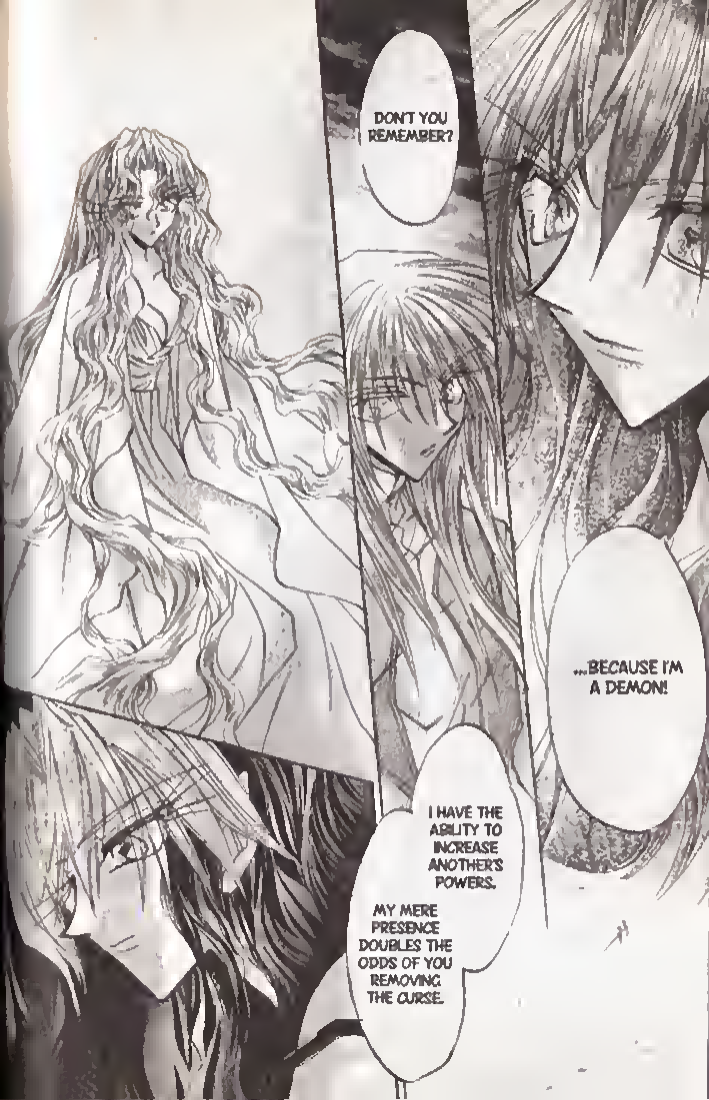
FALCON
CESIA!
SHOULDN'T WE GO DOWN TO THE ISLAND...
...INSTEAD OF LANDING ON THE OPPOSITE SHORE?!
!!
.....!!
SQUELL

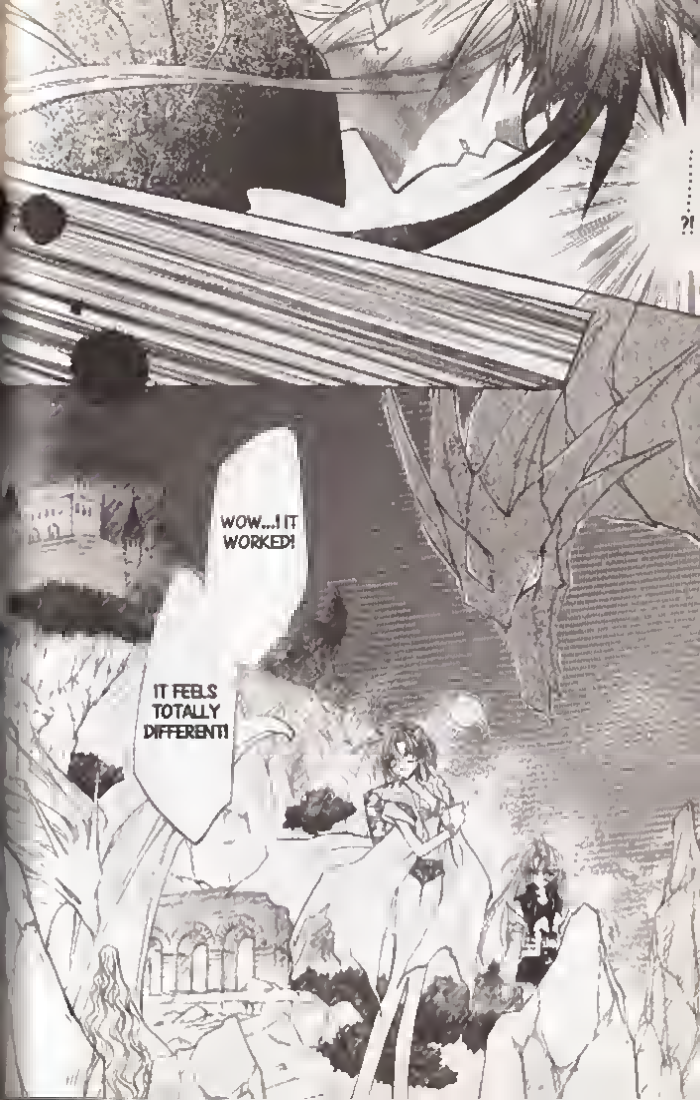
WE CAN'T LEAVE THE ISLAND YET!
WE NEED SAVE HIM!
IT DOESN'T MATTER WHERE WE LAND.
IT'S ALL UNDER NADIL'S CONTROL.
WELL, IF WE'RE GONNA DO THAT, THEN WE SHOULD JUST GO STRAIGHT!
WE DON'T HAVE MUCH TIME LEFT!
WE'RE GOING DOWN THERE...
...BUT THERE'S SOMETHING WE MUST DO FIRST!
BELIEVE ME--I'M AS ANXIOUS AS YOU TO GET THERE!

HEY, THATZ! URGGH!
AAAAAAHH!!
NO!
WAIT!!
THATZ!! THE GROUND IS--

GRANDI WHY DIDN'T YOU SAY SOME-THING SOONER ?!
ZOMA.
THAT'S!!
YOU CAN'T TOUCH THE GROUND! NADIL'S CURSED THE ENTIRE ISLAND!!
THE CLOSER YOU GET TO THE ISLAND...
...THE STRONGER YOU'RE REPELLED BY IT!
SO YOU CAN'T FORCE YOUR WAY ON THE ISLAND.

YOU...
THAT'S! YOU'RE SUCH A DUMMY!
MY LIFE IS IN YOUR HANDS! YOU SHOULD BE MORE CAREFUL!
I SAW MY LIFE FLASH BEFORE MY EYES!
DON'T PANIC!
WE CAN REMOVE WHATEVER'S LEFT OF THE CURSE WITH THE POWER OF VIRTUE!
HOW CAN YOU BE SO SURE?
THE POWER OF VIRTUE...?
I'LL TELL YOU HOW...


DON'T YOU REMEMBER?
...BECAUSE I'M A DEMON!
I HAVE THE ABILITY TO INCREASE ANOTHER'S POWERS.
MY MERE PRESENCE DOUBLES THE ODDS OF YOU REMOVING THE CURSE.


?!
WOW...! IT WORKED!
IT FEELS TOTALLY DIFFERENT!

HIS BODY WAS ALREADY USED TO REVIVE RATH ONCE BEFORE.
THERE'S NO WAY TO REVIVE HIM AGAIN.
BESIDES-- HE'S ALREADY DEAD.
CESIA!

THERE'S NO TIME FOR CHIT-CHAT! IT ISN'T SAFE!
YOU'RE RIGHT.
I'M AFRAID IT WON'T TAKE LONG FOR NADIL TO FIND US.
WE HAVE TO GO BACK TO THE CASTLE.
RATH IS IN THERE...
WAIT.
... SOMEWHERE ...

THE FIRE DRAGON?
!!
FIRE!

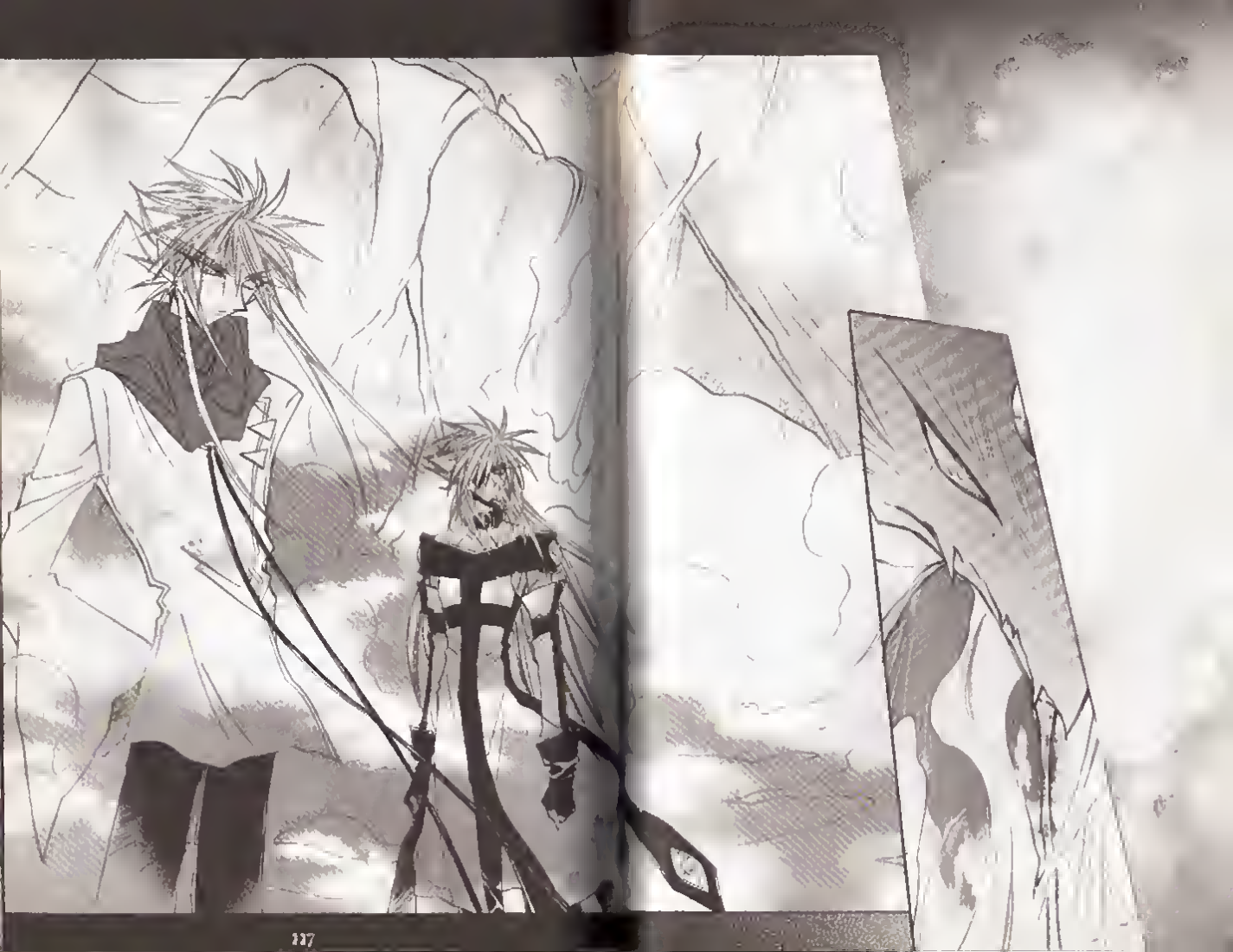
WHAT?!
WHAT'S REALLY GOING ON?
WAS IT HER?
DID SHE SAVE FIRE?
THE STAR PRINCESS...
SORRY RUNE, THATZ.
I'LL EXPLAIN IT TO YOU LATER... BUT FIRST I HAVE SOME BUSINESS TO TAKE CARE OF.

I'M GONNA CALL HIM BACK!
CALL WHO BACK?!
WHAT?!
OH YEAH...? WHO?

HUH?
...AND BRING THEM HERE!
DID I HEAR HER RIGHT?!

THE RED DRAGON OFFICER...
...AND DRAGON KNIGHT OF FIRE! I WILL DRAW THEM OUT OF RATH...

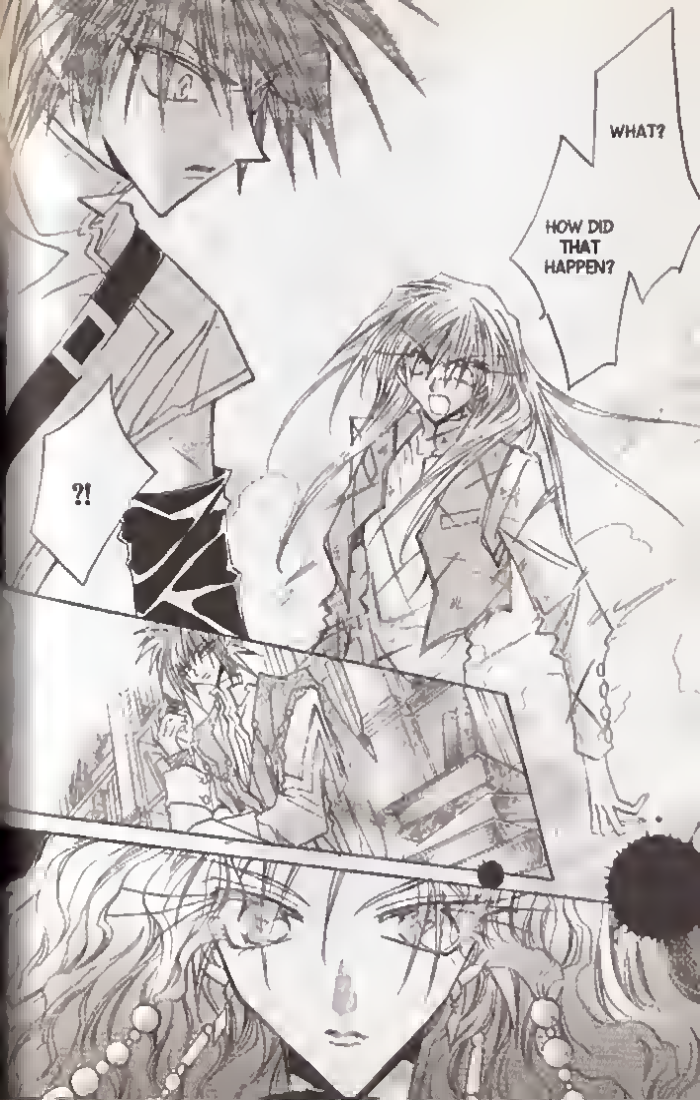
THE DRAGON KNIGHT OF FIRE...?
HUH? RED DRAGON...? I DON'T...?
I AM LIKE, SO OUT OF THE LOOP...!
I'm blown away!
THE RED DRAGON OFFICER
THE RED DRAGON OFFICER...?!



コホ…!

I THOUGHT HE DIED ALREADY.
HMM... THAT'S STRANGE INDEED.

IT GOES TO SHOW THAT IF YOU HAVE THE PATIENCE TO QUIETLY OBSERVE, SOMETHING INTERESTING IS BOUND TO HAPPEN.
I CAN'T SEE IT. CAN YOU?


WHAT?
HOW DID THAT HAPPEN?
?!

YOU'RE THE DEMON WHO CREPT INSIDE THE DRAGON CASTLE! YOU'RE SIERREZ?!
!!!
YOU MEAN THAT'S...
...THE DEMON RATH WAS TALKING ABOUT?!

YES. AND OIL...
...THE DEMON YOU MET AT MOUNT EMPHASA.
!!

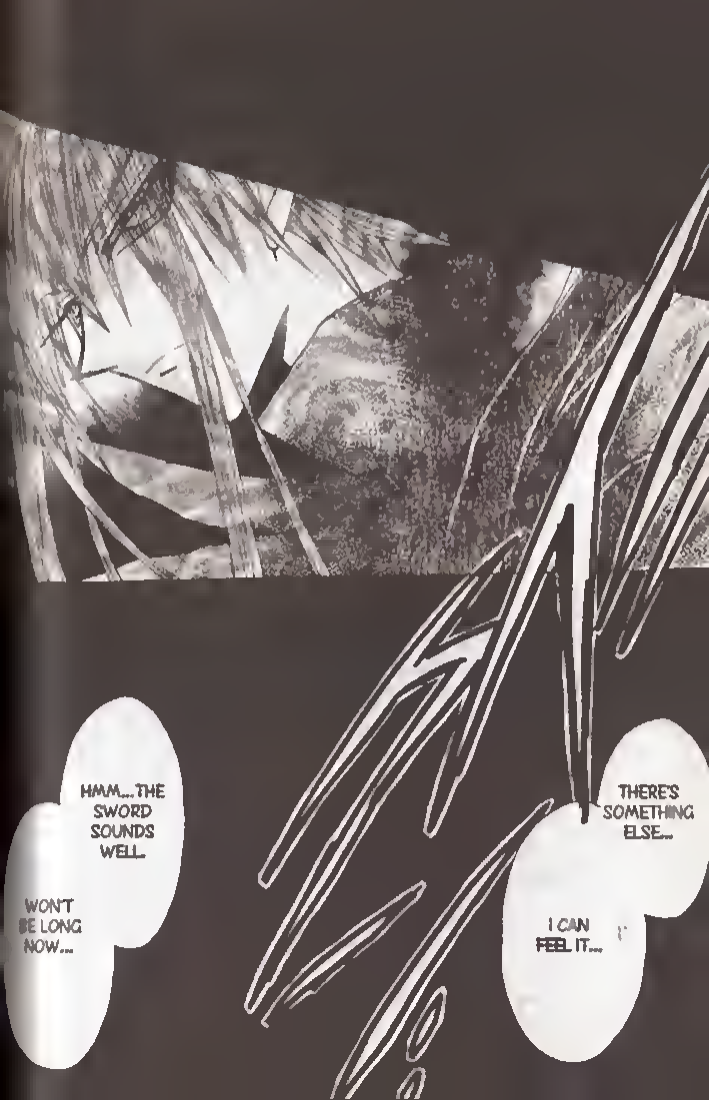
YOU'RE RIGHT.
I HAVEN'T TOLD THEM IT'S YOU YET.
!
BUT DON'T WORRY-- I WILL.
THAT BIRD UNDERSTANDS YOU?
.....!
THIS BIRD IS ZOMA.
WHERE DID YOU FIND IT, ANYWAY?

...ZOMA WAS INSIDE OF RATH AT ONE TIME.
JUST LIKE BERREZ AND GIL...
NO MATTER.
I'M STILL YOUR HUMBLE SERVANT...
...YOUR MAJESTY.
SHOULD I KNEEL BEFORE YOU?
AH, IT'S YOU. YOU SAID I WAS YOUR SERVANT, RIGHT?
NO... YOU'RE WRONG.
YOU HAVE ME CONFUSED WITH THE OTHER CESIA.

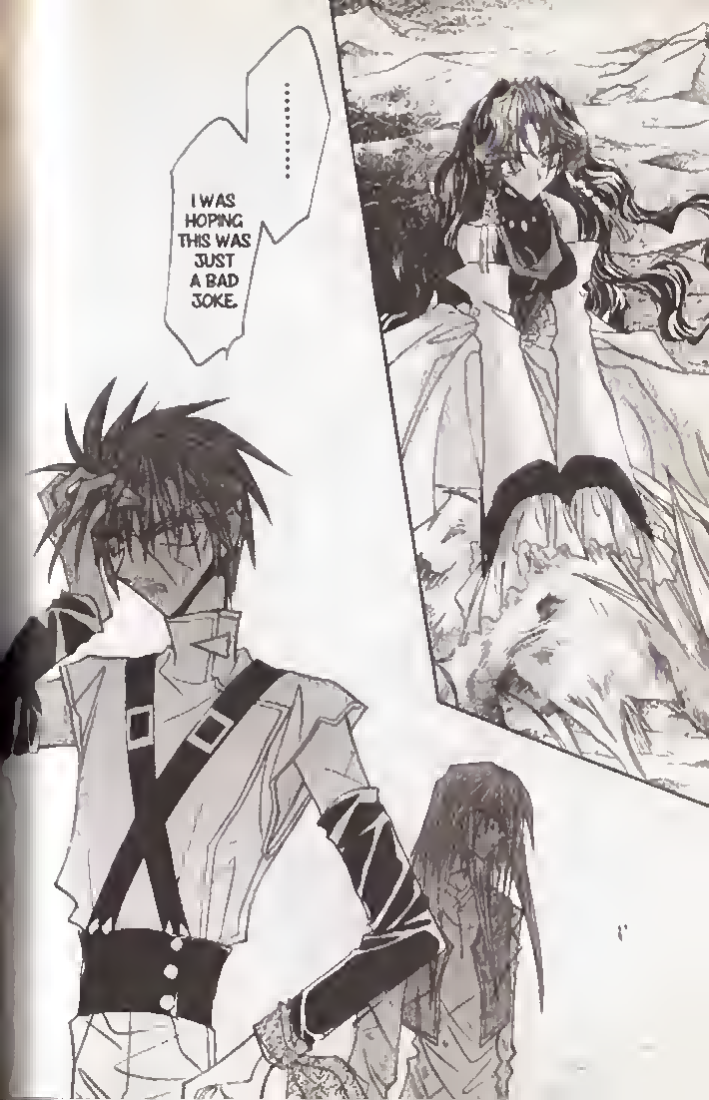
THAT'S WHY CESIA CAN COMMUNICATE WITH IT....!
THAT'S ZOMA?!
CREWGER?! AS WELL AS....?!
BUT HOW?! WHAT'S GOING ON?!

WAIT A SECOND...!
IF THAT'S TRUE... THEN WHAT HAPPENED TO RATH?

THEY MANAGED TO REMOVE THE CURSE LORD NADIL PLACED ON THIS LAND.
.....
...POWER OF VIRTUE TO HER ADVANTAGE! THAT BITCH!
SHE USED THE FAERIE PRINCESS'...
NO MATTER. WE STILL HAVE THE UPPER HAND.
HEH...
IT'S SIMILAR TO HOW WE DESTROYED THE PROTECTIVE SEAL ON THE DRAGON CASTLE.

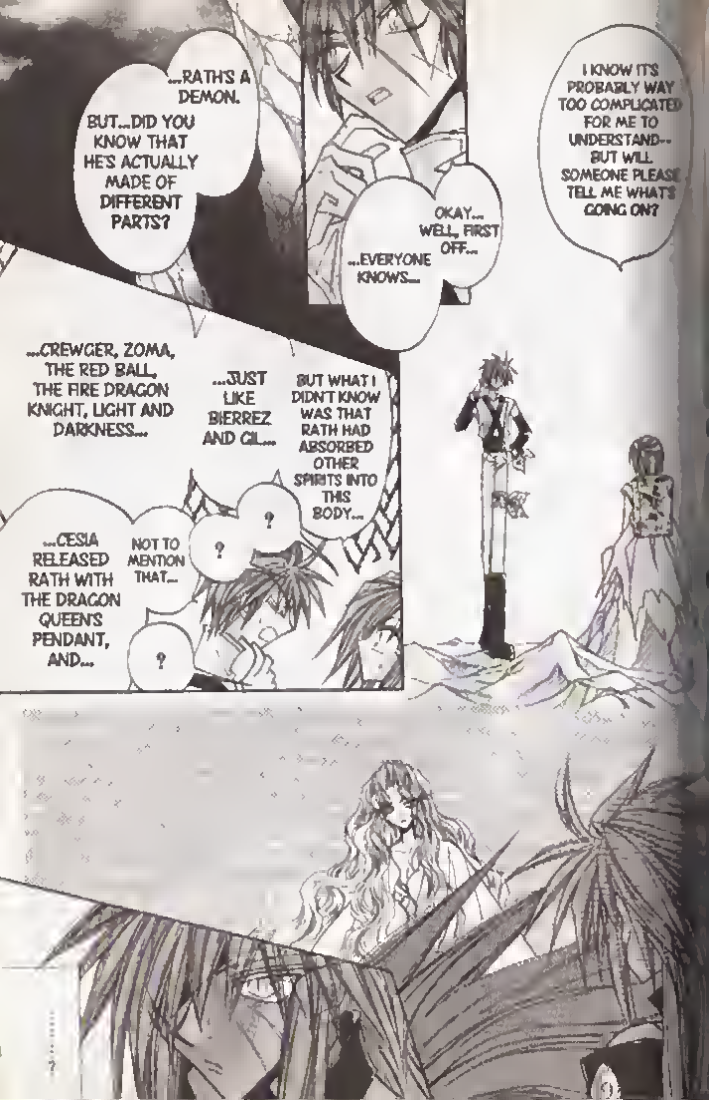

HMM...THE SWORD SOUNDS WELL.
WON'T BE LONG NOW...
THERE'S SOMETHING ELSE...
I CAN FEEL IT...

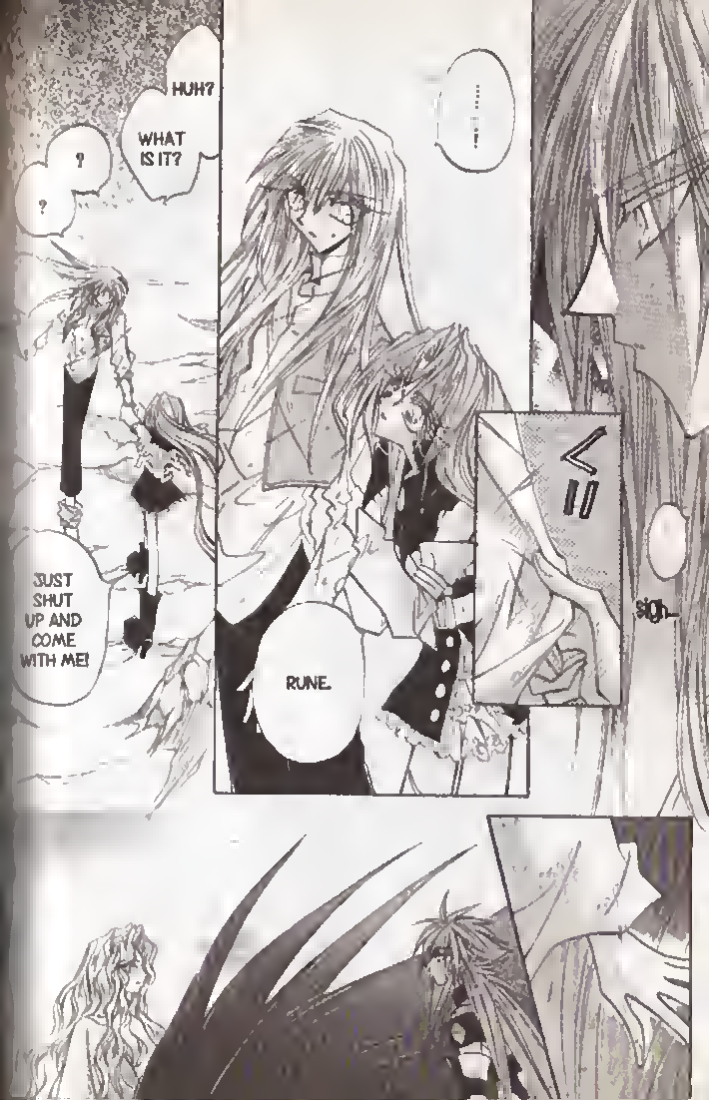
THAT BITC
DEALT OU
PLAN...
...A PAINFUL
BLOW,
THOUGH.
LORD
SHYDEMAN
WAS RIGHT.
WE NEED TO
WATCH OUT
FOR HER.
ALL
RIGHT,
THEN.
I BETTER
GO SEE TO
IT THAT
THOSE FOOLS
DON'T CAUSE
TOO MUCH
TROUBLE.


I WAS HOPING THIS WAS JUST A BAD JOKE.

BESIDES, IT'S HAPPENED BEFORE.
THEY SHOULD GET IT SOONER OR LATER.
DO YOU THINK THEY UNDERSTAND WHAT HAPPENED?
AND LET'S NOT FORGET FEDELTA.
I'M SURE WE'RE BEING WATCHED ...
...BY NADIL...
...AND HIS CHIEF OFFICERS.
BESIDES, HE DOESN'T HAVE ANY ARMS, NOW.
THEY CAN'T USE CREWGER AS A CONTAINER ANYMORE.

IT'S STILL BETTER THAN BEING LOCKED UP IN THAT UNDERGROUND DUNGEON...
YEAH... PRETTY MUCH ALL THE DEMONS.
YOU KNOW, RATH WAS READY TO DIE.
IT'S ALMOST LIKE HE'S DEAD ALREADY.
...THOUGH I SUPPOSE RATH WOULD DISAGREE.


I KNOW IT'S PROBABLY WAY TOO COMPLICATED FOR ME TO UNDERSTAND-- BUT WILL SOMEONE PLEASE TELL ME WHAT'S GOING ON?
OKAY... WELL, FIRST OFF...
...EVERYONE KNOWS...
...RATH'S A DEMON.
BUT...DID YOU KNOW THAT HE'S ACTUALLY MADE OF DIFFERENT PARTS?
...CREWGER, ZOMA, THE RED BALL, THE FIRE DRAGON KNIGHT, LIGHT AND DARKNESS...
...JUST LIKE BIERREZ AND GIL...
BUT WHAT I DIDN'T KNOW WAS THAT RATH HAD ABSORBED OTHER SPIRITS INTO THIS BODY...
...CESIA RELEASED RATH WITH THE DRAGON QUEEN'S PENDANT, AND...
NOT TO MENTION THAT...
?
?
?
?


HUH?
WHAT IS IT?
?
?
JUST SHUT UP AND COME WITH ME!
RUNE.
.....!
SIGH-

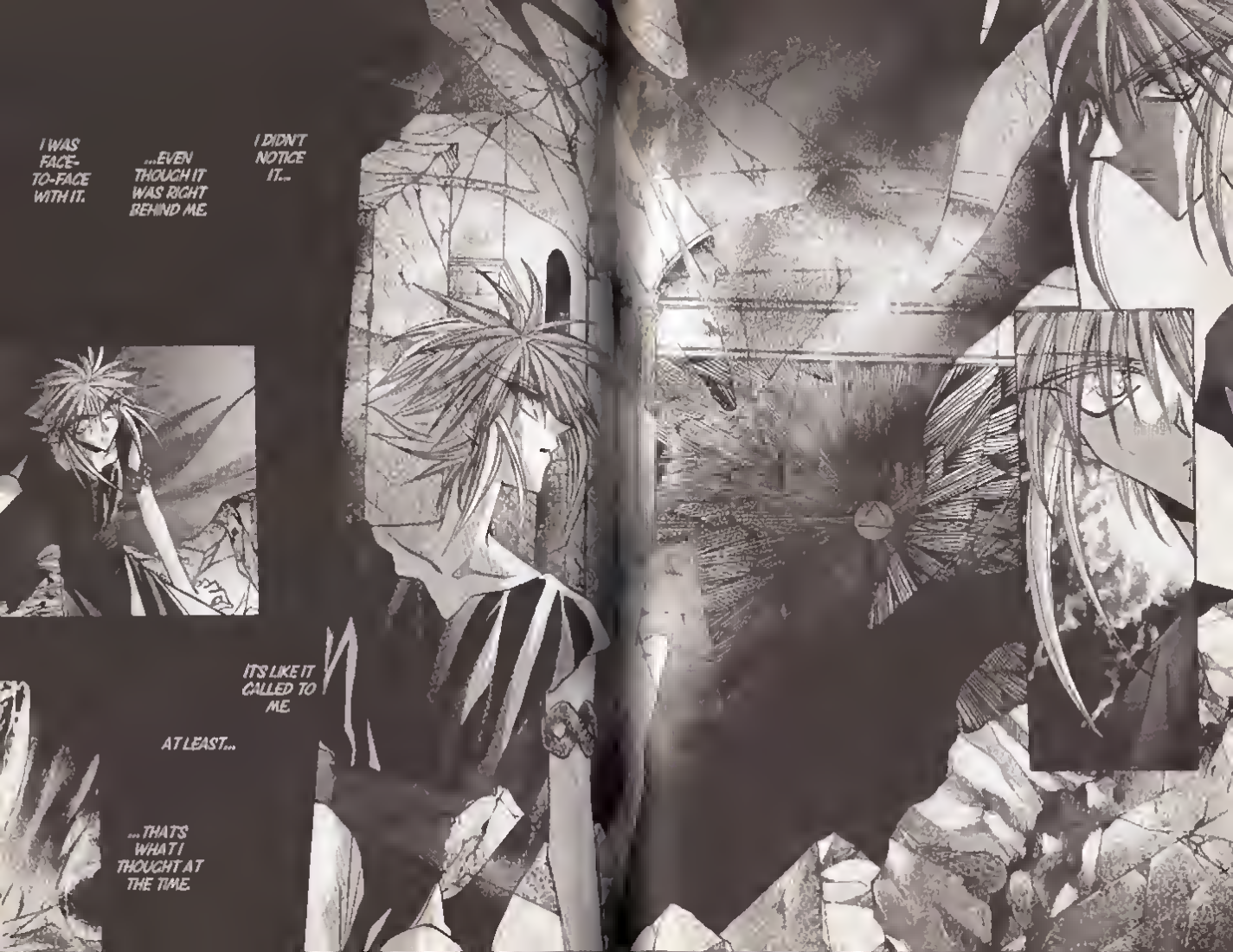
UM!
YOU PULLED ME SO HARD THAT MY CLOTHES RIPPED!
WHAAAT?!
WHO CARES IF THEY'RE TORN?
DON'T WORRY!
I BROUGHT SOME CLOTHES THAT WILL LOOK GOOD ON YOU!
HEY!
WATCH IT!
ALL RIGHT, ALREADY! JUST STOP TEARING MY CLOTHES!

WE WERE
BOTH KILLED
BY RATH...

...BUT WE LIVED
ON INSIDE OF
HIM.

I ONLY ATTACKED THE DRAGON CASTLE THREE TIMES...
...BUT I RAN INTO HIM FOUR TIMES.
WHEN I FIRST SAW THAT GUY...
...I HAD NO IDEA WHAT HE REALLY WAS.
ALL I WANTED...
...WAS TO KILL THE DRAGON LORD.
I WAS SO CURIOUS THAT I WOULD HANG OUT NEAR THE DRAGON CASTLE.

IT CAME IN CONTACT WITH THE DRAGON LORD'S BLOOD.
I MADE SURE IT WAS DEAD BEFORE I APPROACHED IT.
IT WAS GLOWING BECAUSE IT HAD TOUCHED THE DRAGON LORD'S BLOOD.
IT WAS THE BEAST OF ICE...
...ILLUSER.

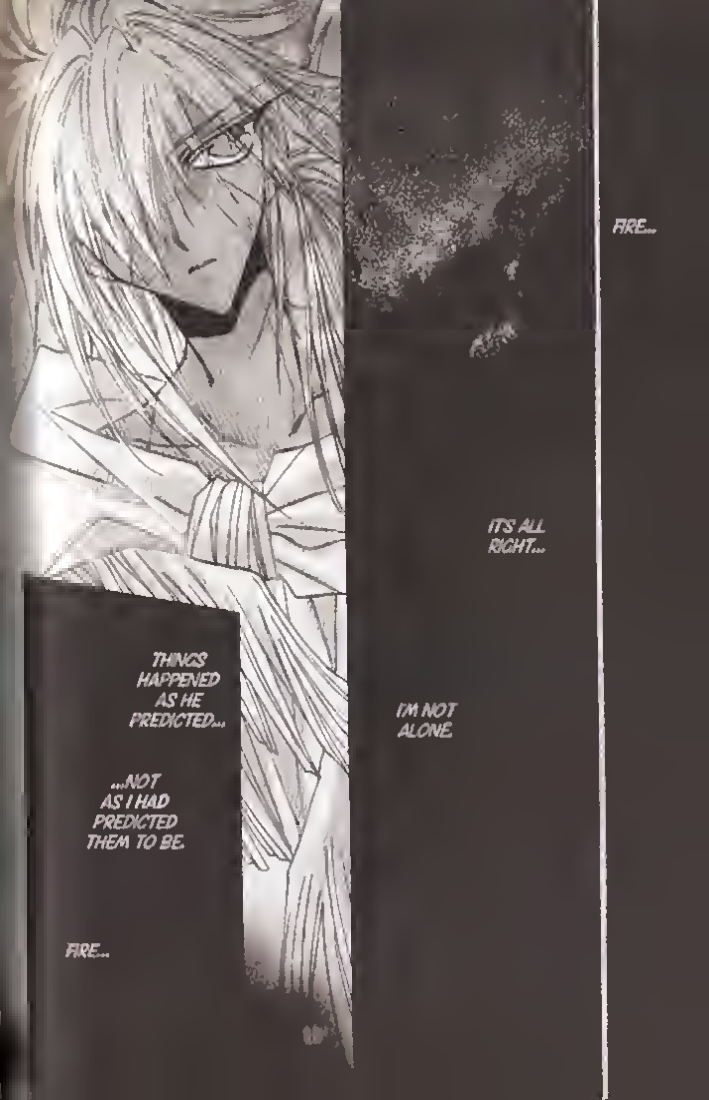

I WAS FACE-TO-FACE WITH IT.
...EVEN THOUGH IT WAS RIGHT BEHIND ME.
I DIDN'T NOTICE IT...
IT'S LIKE IT CALLED TO ME.
AT LEAST...
...THAT'S WHAT I THOUGHT AT THE TIME.

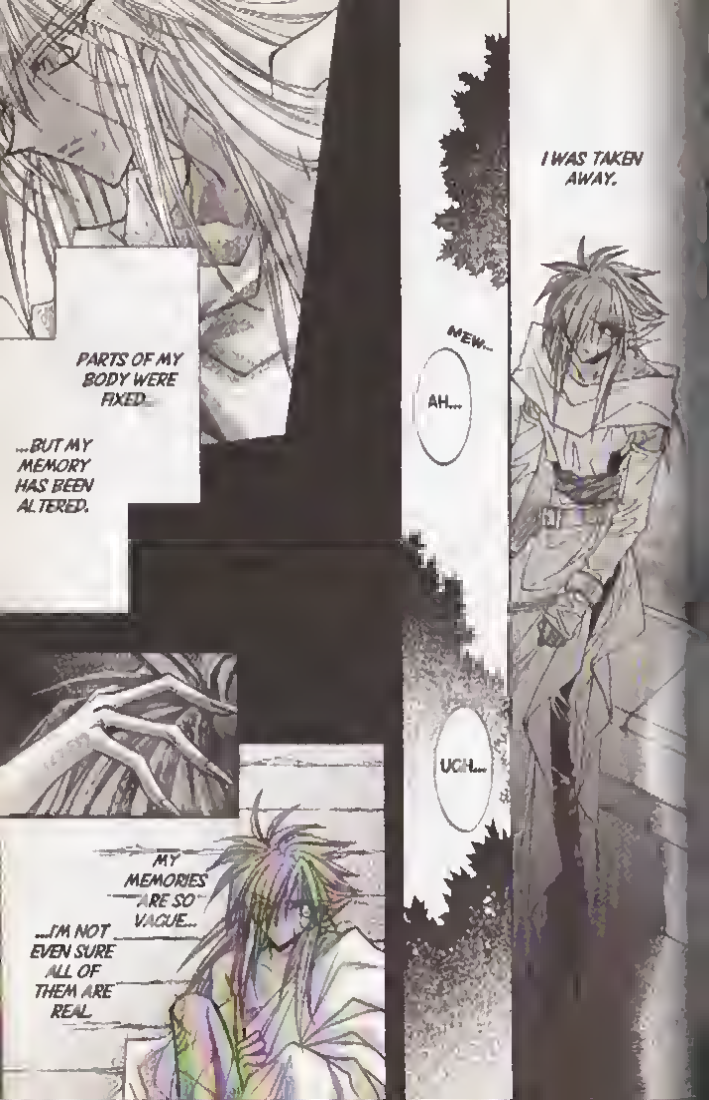
I DON'T KNOW WHY...
...BUT I REMEMBERED THINKING THAT THE CREATURE WAS NOT OF THIS WORLD.

WHO KNEW THAT SOMETHING WITHOUT FORM OR SHAPE COULD BE SO FRIGHTENING?
SO I DREW BACK IN FEAR.
AT LEAST THAT'S WHAT KHARL SAID.
"DIDN'T THE LORD END UP TAKING IT IN?"
"I HEARD THAT IT WAS KILLED BY THE DRAGON LORD."
"I'VE HEARD OF THAT CREATURE."

BUT KHARL DIDN'T ANSWER ME.
HE WASN'T LIKE THAT BEFORE.
LIKE WHAT?
WHAT WAS THE DRAGON LORD THINKING?!
HE ACTUALLY TOOK IN THAT HORRIBLE MONSTER AND MADE IT A DRAGON KNIGHT?!
INSTEAD, HE JUST SMILED.
IN THE END, HE WORKED FOR THE DRAGON LORD.
EVEN SO... HE MUST'VE REMEMBERED ALL OF HIS COMRADES THAT THE DRAGON FAMILY KILLED.

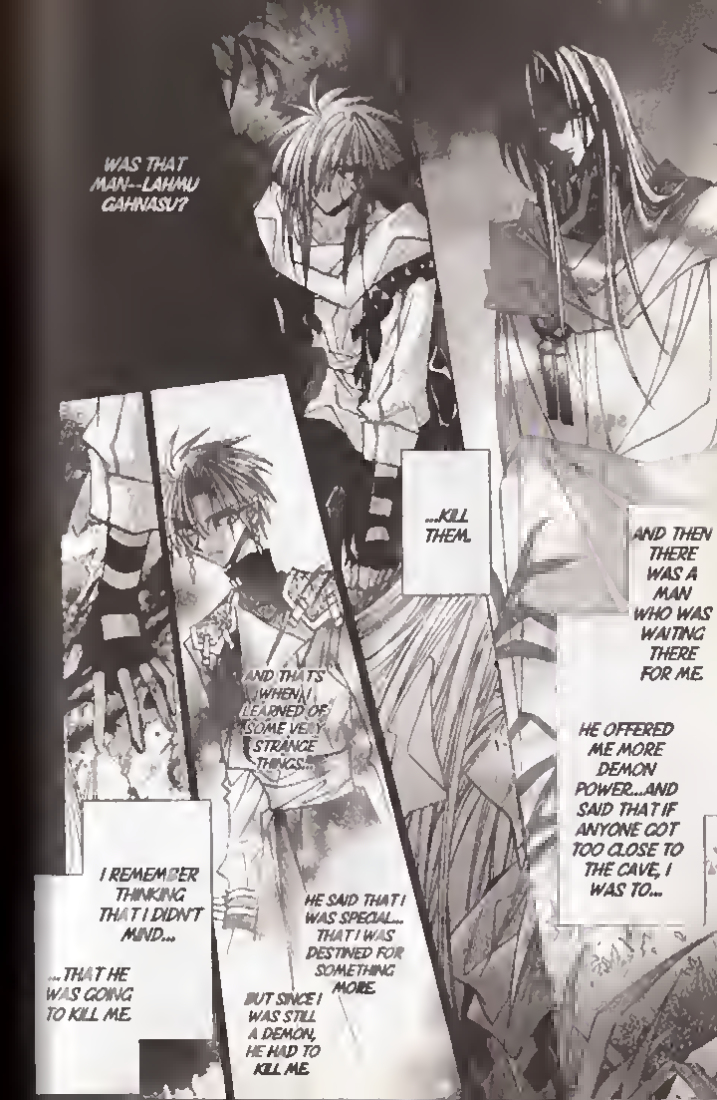
I WAS JUST THINKING ABOUT WHAT KHARL SAID TO ME...
I'M NOT THEIR PUPPET!
THEY CAN'T JUST USE ME LIKE THIS!
WHAT'S GOING ON?!
WHAT'S HAPPENING TO ME?!

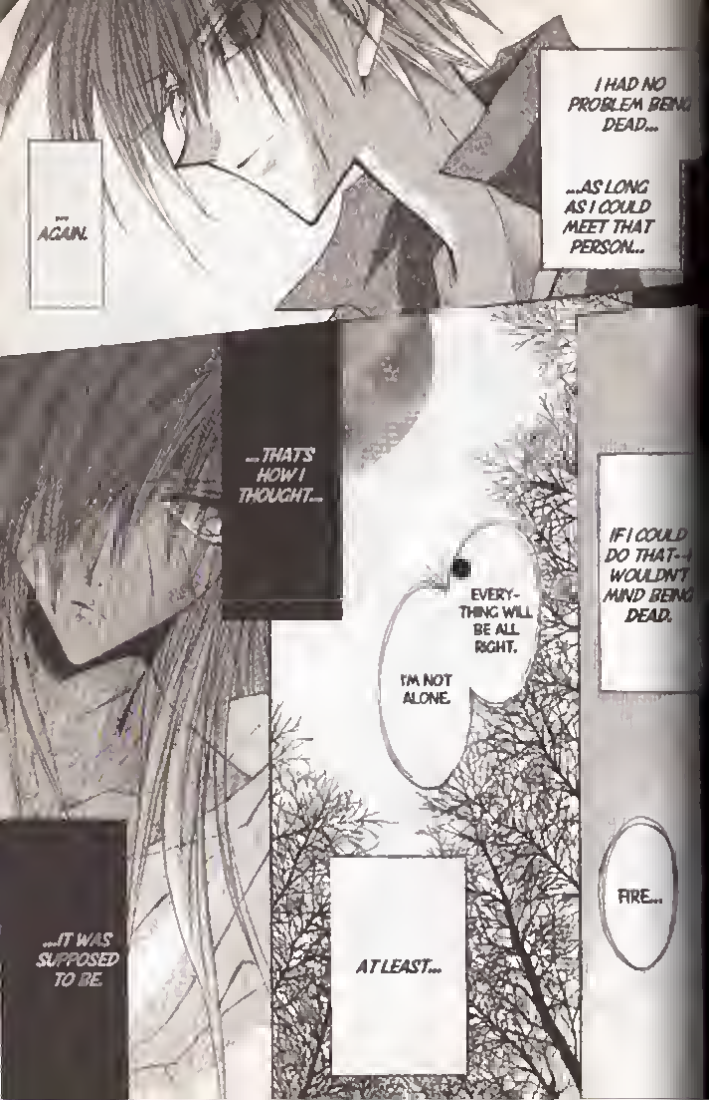

FIRE...
IT'S ALL RIGHT...
I'M NOT ALONE.
THINGS HAPPENED AS HE PREDICTED...
...NOT AS I HAD PREDICTED THEM TO BE.
FIRE...


I WAS TAKEN AWAY.
MEW...
AH...
UGH...
PARTS OF MY BODY WERE FIXED...
...BUT MY MEMORY HAS BEEN ALTERED.
MY MEMORIES ARE SO VAGUE...
...I'M NOT EVEN SURE ALL OF THEM ARE REAL

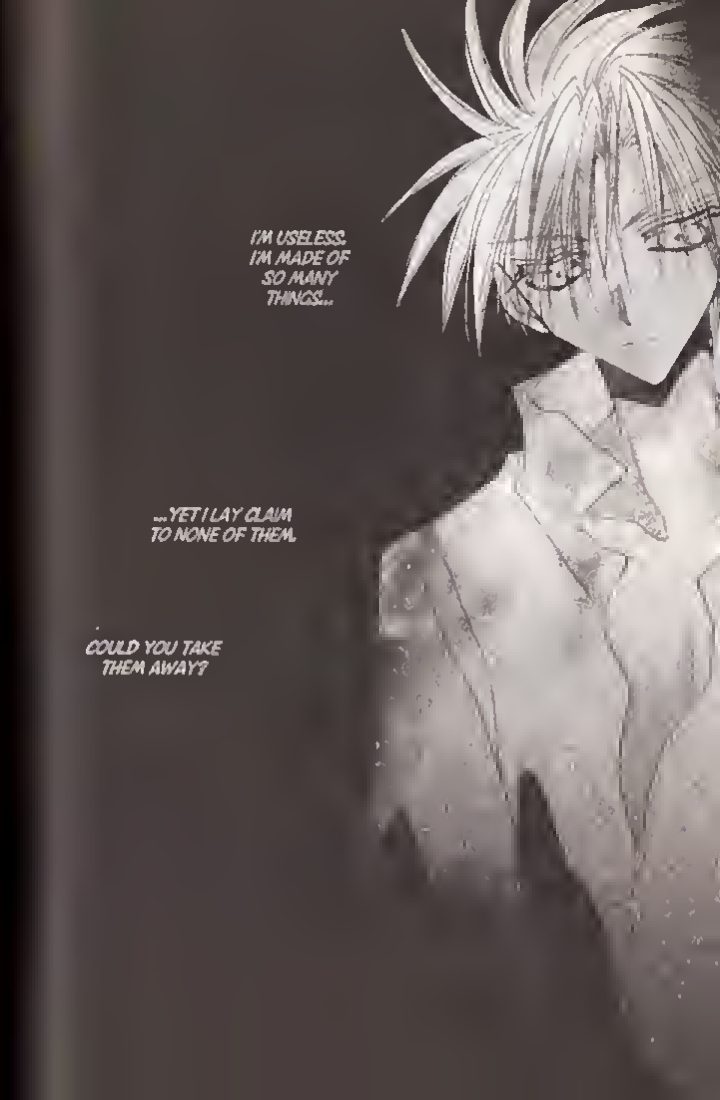
"YOU SHOULD EAT."
...
IS THIS MEMORY REAL?
OR IS IT AN ILLUSION? PERHAPS ITS A DREAM I WISHED WERE REAL?
SOMETHING ABOUT IT FELT REAL TO ME.
BUT IT'S SO MUDDLED... EVEN HIS SMILE SEEMED VAGUE.
MEOW.
Uh...
LAH...
...MU...

...AND SOMETIMES...I LOOKED LIKE A BEAST.
SOMETIMES...
I REMEMBER HIS NAME, NOW.
...I LOOKED HUMAN.
I WENT BACK TO THAT MOUNTAIN TO WAIT FOR SOMETHING.
CAN I BE SURE OF THIS, THOUGH? MY MEMORY IS SO FUZZY...
THERE WAS A WOMAN WHO COULD MANIPULATE MINDS...
...AND A DEMON OF FIRE...
...WHO LAID A TRAP FOR ME.


WAS THAT MAN--LAHMU GAHNASU?
AND THEN THERE WAS A MAN WHO WAS WAITING THERE FOR ME.
...KILL THEM.
HE OFFERED ME MORE DEMON POWER...AND SAID THAT IF ANYONE GOT TOO CLOSE TO THE CAVE, I WAS TO...
AND THAT'S WHEN I LEARNED OF SOME VERY STRANGE THINGS...
I REMEMBER THINKING THAT I DIDN'T MIND...
...THAT HE WAS GOING TO KILL ME.
HE SAID THAT I WAS SPECIAL... THAT I WAS DESTINED FOR SOMETHING MORE.
BUT SINCE I WAS STILL A DEMON, HE HAD TO KILL ME.


...AGAIN.
I HAD NO PROBLEM BEING DEAD...
...AS LONG AS I COULD MEET THAT PERSON...
...THAT'S HOW I THOUGHT...
IF I COULD DO THAT--I WOULDN'T MIND BEING DEAD.
EVERY-THING WILL BE ALL RIGHT.
I'M NOT ALONE.
FIRE...
...IT WAS SUPPOSED TO BE.
AT LEAST...

MANY OF MY FRIENDS AND COLLEAGUES WERE KILLED BY RATH.
THEY PROBABLY BECAME A PART OF HIM, TOO, IN ORDER TO HELP MAINTAIN HIS ANIMATED BODY.
YOUR FRIENDS?
HAVE I MET THEM BEFORE?


I'M USELESS. I'M MADE OF SO MANY THINGS...
...YET I LAY CLAIM TO NONE OF THEM.
COULD YOU TAKE THEM AWAY?

YOU KNOW...
...I WOULDN'T MIND HAVING THE RED BALL AT ALL.
IF YOU DON'T NEED IT, I CAN TAKE IT.
NO...
...I DON'T THINK SO. RATH KILLED THEM A LONG TIME AGO.
WHO KNOWS? YOU MIGHT HAVE MET SOME, BUT IT DOESN'T MATTER.
THEY WEREN'T DEMONS LIKE FEDELTA. THEY WERE DRIFTERS.

SIERREZ...
...YOU WANT TO FULFILL YOUR SECRET DREAM.
ISN'T THAT RIGHT?
ARE YOU CERTAIN...
...YOU WISH TO KNEEL BEFORE HER?
IT MEANS THAT YOU ACCEPT YOUR ROLE AS A CONTAINER.
IT'S OKAY.
THAT BALL WAS ORIGINALLY YOURS... WASN'T IT?
NOT SURE...
...BUT AT LEAST YOU'RE NOT A DEMON.
...I'M PART OF THE DRAGON FAMILY NOW?

HUH?!
ALL THAT RATH PREDICTED CAME TRUE.
WHAT ARE YOU TWO DOING?
HEY...! I'M NOT YOUR DRESS-UP DOLL!
ISN'T HE STYLISH ?!
LOOK!

YOU SHOULD BE MORE APPRECIATIVE. IT'S A WHOLE LOT BETTER THAN YOUR RATTY CLOTHES. I MANAGED TO BRING THESE DESPITE ALL THE TROUBLE WE WENT THROUGH.
I JUST WANT TO SEE WHAT LOOKS BEST ON YOU!
I HAVE NO PROBLEM WEARING THESE! YOU'RE THE ONE WHO WANTS ME TO CHANGE MY OUTFIT EVERY TWO SECONDS!
YOU'VE GOT TOO MANY OPTIONS!
THIS IS SO STUPID...!
WOW! YOU REALLY BROUGHT A LOT OF OUTFITS!
WHY WOULD I? YOUR CLOTHES STILL LOOK GOOD!
UM...WHO ARE YOU, ANYWAY?
ER...I'M THATZ.
DON'T BE SORE, THATZ!
IF YOU WANT NEW THREADS, I'LL SEE WHAT I CAN DO.

HOW'S FIRE?
HE'S GETTING BETTER, BUT...
...IT'LL TAKE SOME TIME FOR HIM TO MAKE A FULL RECOVERY.
I WONDER IF IT WAS MADE WHO DID THIS?
HE'S SEVERELY INSURED. AFTER I LET HIM REST FOR A BIT...
...I'LL TRY HEALING HIM AGAIN.
DON'T BE SHY.
YOU'RE MESSING WITH ME, AREN'T YOU?
ARE YOU CHANGING OUTFITS, THATZ? I WANNA NEW OUTFIT. TOO!
PERHAPS I COULD USE A CHANGE OF CLOTHES, TOO.
HEY!
STOP!
I NEED TO ASK YOU SOMETHING!
?
NOT YOU— KITCHEL AND CESIA!

HUH?
WHAT IS IT?
RINGLEYS! I NEED YOUR OPINION, TOO!
?!
?
?
?
I'M A LITTLE WORRIED...SO I WAS HOPING YOU COULD CONFIRM SOMETHING FOR ME.
WHY ME?
?

THIS GIRL, FIJI...SHE MENTIONED SOMEONE NAMED GIL.
IS THAT YOU?
OH... FIJI...
I WAS WATCHING OVER FIJI...
...BUT IF YOU WANT TO KNOW MORE ABOUT HER, YOU COULD ALWAYS ASK CESIA.
TOO BAD RATH'S NOT HERE.
HE KNEW MOST OF THE DETAILS. I'M AFRAID I CAN'T TELL YOU MUCH.

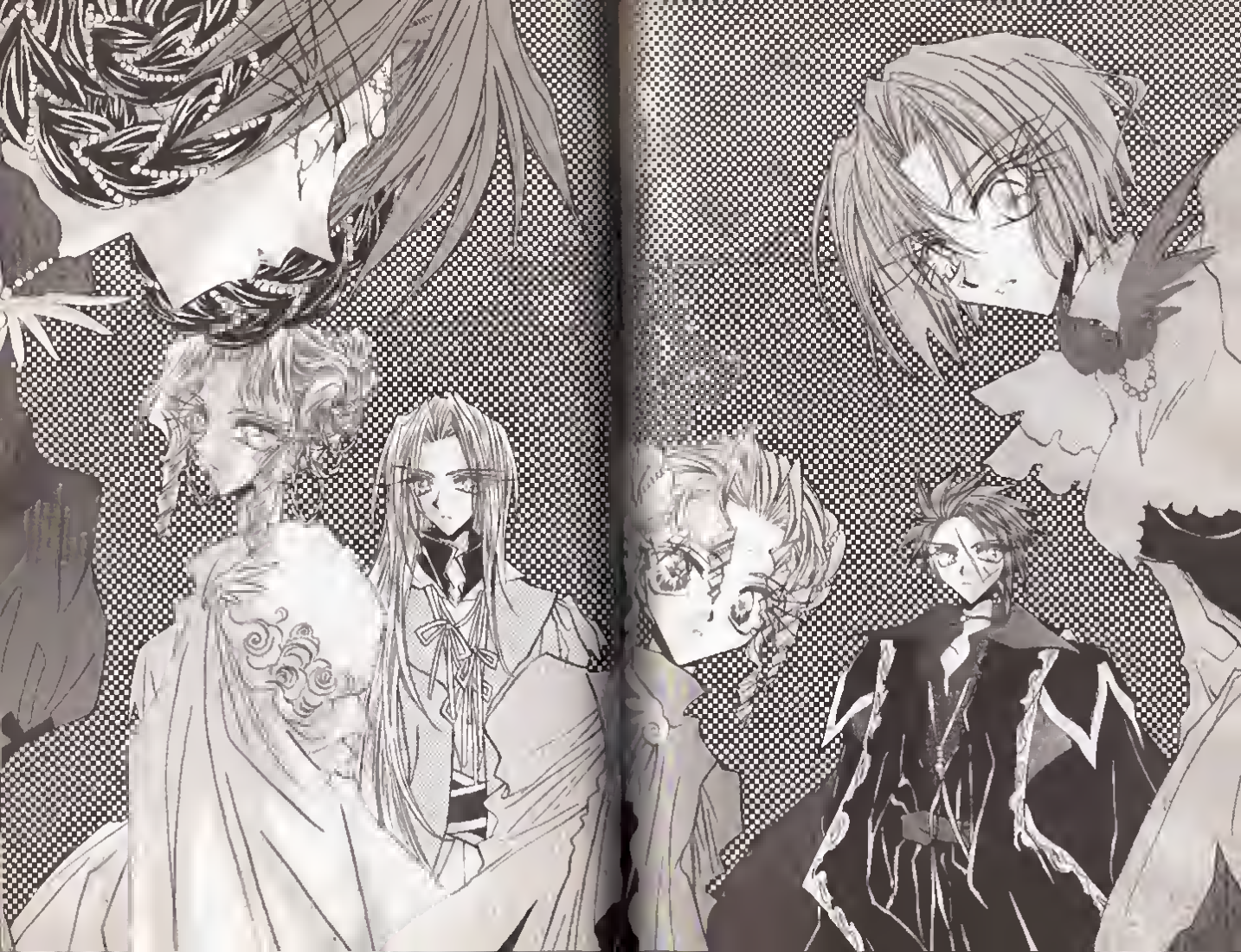
...IF YOU WOULD JUST STAY STILL...
THIS WAY, IT'LL BE OUT OF YOUR WAY. YOU KNOW, THIS WOULD GO MUCH FASTER...
...REALLY NECES-SARY?
IS TYING UP MY HAIR...
YOURS IS LONG, TOO. WHY DON'T YOU TIE IT UP?
WHAT ABOUT YOU?

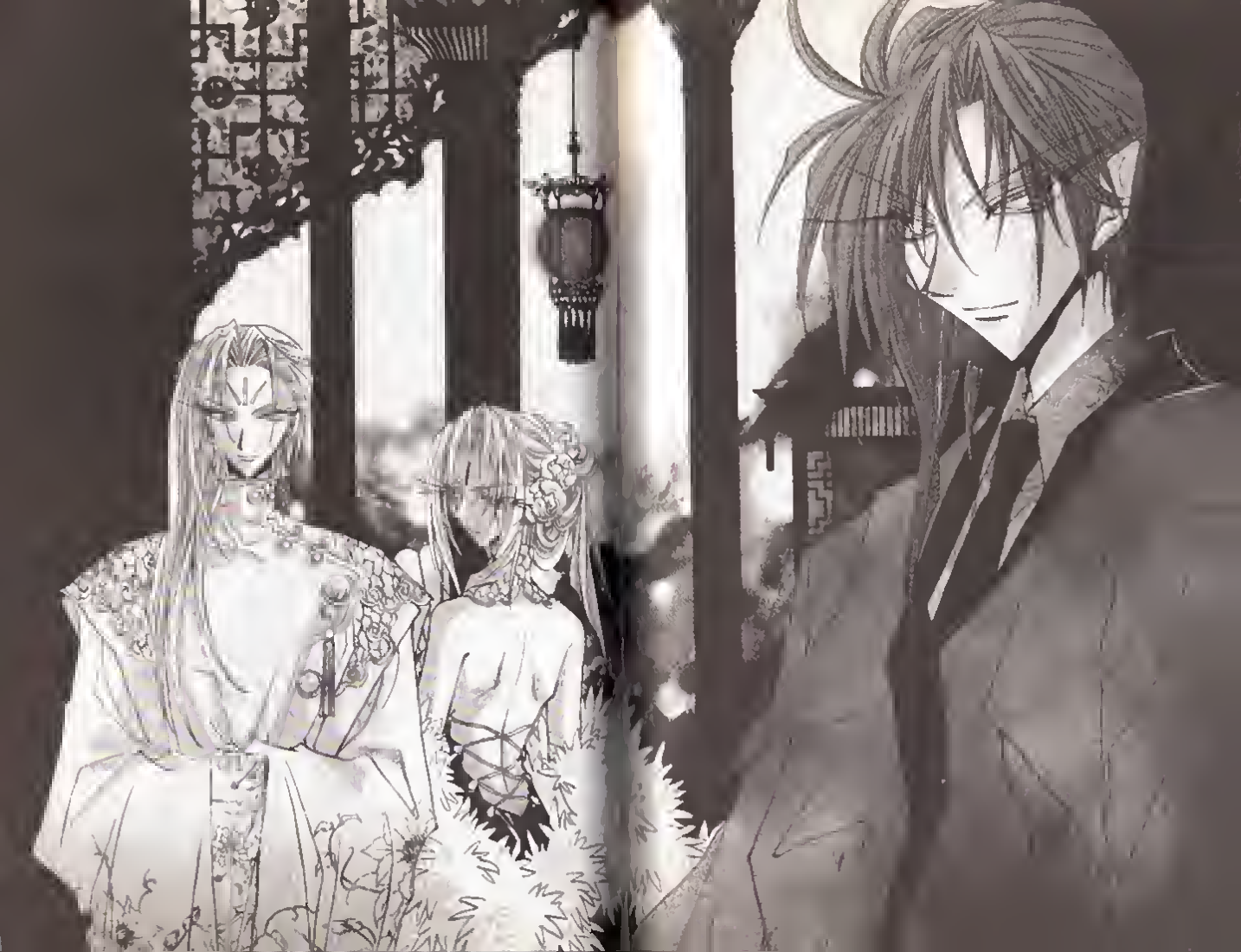
I GREW MY HAIR OUT ON PURPOSE. SO JUST LEAVE IT BE.
???
LET IT GROW?
I DON'T NEED TO TELL HIM THE TRUTH.
RUNE DOESN'T NEED TO KNOW WHAT HAPPENED TO ME.
.....
.....

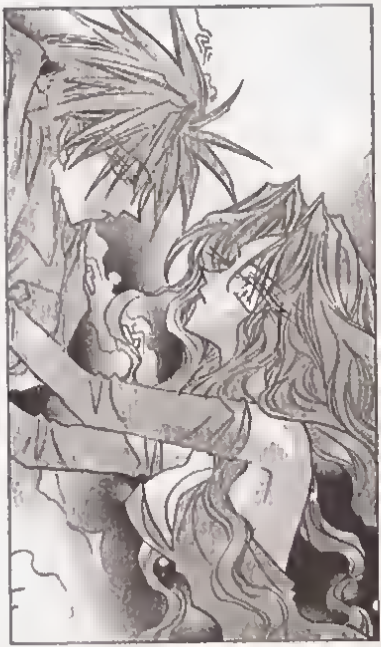
DRAGON KNIGHTS

ドラゴン騎士団

Illustrations







Dragon Knights

In Volume 22:

Cesia vows to find Rath's spirit a corporeal body, and uses the Sacred Dragon Eye to transport her and the knights to the western continent of Dusis. There, Bierrez, Nadil and Gil, once occupants of Rath's body, try to make sense of their existence. Gil, in particular, travels to Dragon Castle solely to find out once and for all if his memories are false or real. But when an "acquaintance" from the past mysteriously appears before Bierrez and Gil, it places not only their mission, but their very lives in jeopardy! The plot thickens in the next thrilling installment of Dragon Knights!